

COACH AND BUS

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

WEEK

ISSUE 30 SEPTEMBER 12 1992



POISED FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH

Optare's Spectra challenges convention and gains top marks on test



BRITISH OPERATORS IN MERCY DASH

2,500-mile rescue trip saves Slovenian refugees from war zonePage 5

PSV REGISTRATIONS ARE UP AGAIN

K-plates help 13 per cent boost to new coach and bus sales.....Page 9



GUIDED TOUR OF EURO PROGRESS

Our first reader offer with TAS will visit O-Bahn, GLT and RAIPage 31

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M.O.T. FEB 1993.

DAF 1987 DKVL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 51 recliners, red/grey moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental entrance/exit door, tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine, power entrance door, wired for T.V./video, TELMA, ABS anti-lock braking, cream/duo blue.
M.O.T. MAY 1993

DAF 1982 (AUGUST) DKTL PLAXTON SUPREME 12M 57 str., red moquette, power entrance door, white/green.
M.O.T. AUG. 1993

DAF 1983 SB2300 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 47 recliners, Autumn tint moquette, toilet, driver's berth, water boiler, Webasto, courier seat, curtains, wired T.V./video, white/blue.
M.O.T. JULY 1993

VOLVO 1987 B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 53 recliners, brown moquette, double glazing, TELMA, power door. All white.
M.O.T. MARCH 1993

BOVA 1984 CALYPSO INTEGRAL 12M, 51 str, red moquette, centre sunken toilet, white/crimson/grey.
M.O.T. MAY 1993.

VOLVO 1986 VAN HOOL ACRON T815 INTEGRAL 12M, DAF powered, 49 recliners, brown moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, berth, double glazed windows, blinds, drinks machine, fridge, courier seat, wired T.V./video, cream/green.
M.O.T. JUNE 1993

LEYLAND 1989 TIGER (260 BHP) DUPLÉ 320 12M, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow.
M.O.T. 1993

DAF 1984 DKFL DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN 12M, 53 str., grey/blue/black moquette, toilet with rear continental door, courier seat, double glazed side windows, power entrance door, TELMA retarder, cream/duo blue.
M.O.T. DEC 1992

BOVA 1982 EUROPA II INTEGRAL 12M, 51 recliners, brown moquette, white/red.
M.O.T. AUG 1993

VOLVO 1988 B10M GL JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P599 12M, 53 recliners, grey/red moquette, courier seat, double glazed side windows, white/primrose/blue.
M.O.T. JAN 1993

VOLVO 1988 B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, Webasto heating, drinks machine, coolbox, courier seat, white.
M.O.T. 1993

VOLVO 1984 B10M VAN HOOL ASTRAL 12M, 58 recliners, brown/orange moquette, n/s sunken toilet, window blinds with curtains, driver's berth, Webasto, courier seat, wired T.V./video, servery, drinks machine, white/grey/blue.
M.O.T. NOV. 1992

VOLVO 1989 B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, courier seat, cream/orange/yellow.
M.O.T. 1993

LEYLAND 1989 (August) TIGER (260 BHP) DUPLÉ 320 12M, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow. CHOICE OF TWO IDENTICAL VEHICLES
M.O.T. 1993

VOLVO 1980 B58 PLAXTON SUPREME IV 11M, 47 recliners, beige/brown moquette, finished white/red/cream.
M.O.T. MAY 1993

TRADE DESCRIPTIONS ACT;
In detailing these used saloon coaches we have quoted the year of registration and not necessarily the model or year of manufacture.

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COACH AND BUS

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

WEEK

ISSUE 30

SEPTEMBER 12 1992

The collapse of another tour company was the last thing the coach industry needed after the Land Travel debacle. As the Voyager International group went under last weekend with its Impact and Med International subsidiaries the effects percolated through and threatened to become the coaching equivalent of the house of cards.

An operator's biggest worry in these uncertain times is the size of the bad debts. Money owed is an asset on paper, but rapidly converts into a potential tragedy when a receiver is called in. When cash flow dries up rapidly and the innocent company becomes a victim.

Fortunately the spectacle of passengers stranded all over Europe was avoided thanks to the wise precaution of ABTA bonding. And the end of the season is the least inconvenient time, if there is a good time for company failure.

Whatever the root cause behind the coach-buying decisions, it is proof that some companies are prepared to demonstrate their faith in the future

Ironically the news on the vehicle manufacturing front looks encouraging. The latest SMMT registration figures confirm that sales are up for coaches at least - though big bus sales have yet to be revitalised.

Whatever the root cause behind the coach-buying decisions, it is proof that some companies are prepared to demonstrate their faith in the future. We were even tempted to talk in terms of a recovery with dealers' yards emptying by the day and manufacturers talking of full order books and long delivery lead times.

Yet, just when we need this evidence that movement towards the end of the tunnel is gathering pace our enthusiasm for grasping for clues has taken another severe jolt.

In truth the progress out of these hard times is going to be a slow process requiring measured steps and the best of management skills.

The Voyager episode reminds us once again of two pressing facts. The first is that low-budget holidays with costs and margins cut to the bone are highly susceptible when the volume disappears. And, while the cost of bonding may even have contributed to Voyager's demise, at least the image of coach holidays hasn't been dealt another Land Travel-style body blow.

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The PSV Industry's News Weekly **WEEK** ISSUE 30 SEPTEMBER 12 1992

Coach and Bus Week is published by Emap Response, part of Emap Business Publishing Ltd, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS. Telephone 0733 63100
Classified Advertising 0733 898111
Fax 0733 62656
Telex 32157. ISSN 0953-8240

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Coach and Bus Week is only available by pre-paid subscription.

Domestic subscription rate is £45 per year; Europe £85 and worldwide air mail £115. All rates include postage.

Contributions should be sent to The Editor, *Coach and Bus Week*, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS.

The editor cannot accept responsibility for claims and statements by authors and manufacturers whose views do not necessarily represent those of the publisher, or for any mistakes or misprints, although every care is taken to ensure accuracy.

Typesetting and origination: Meridian Media Services Ltd, Orton Southgate, Peterborough.
Printing: William Gibbons & Son.

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BUSINESS
PUBLISHING

■ **South Yorkshire politicians** have continued to stall over the sale of SYT-Mainline to its employees. Workers at the PTC were concerned that they would lose their pension rights if the sale was delayed beyond the Government's December 31 deadline, but the councillors have now promised to find staff a comparable private pension if they have to leave the Local Government Superannuation Scheme. Page 6

■ **Liverpool is racing with London** to become the first British city with a low-floor bus service. Merseytravel is using funding from the City Challenge scheme to set up a five-vehicle service in the city centre, with a planned start date in 1993. Meanwhile, Neoplan and Dennis have thrown their hats into the ring with right-hand drive low-floor buses for the British market. Page 7.

■ **EYMS has amalgamated** its leisure operations, including Cherry Coaches and Cottingham Mini Coaches, with the coaching operations of East Yorkshire and the rail charter business Rail UK. The move frees space at the East Yorkshire depot in Hull for the bus operation, which is engaged in an increasingly bitter struggle with the local municipal, Hull City Transport. Page 10.

■ **Chester City Transport**, under pressure from Guide Friday in its home territory, has launched a tour bus operation in Liverpool. Dead running between the two cities is reduced by running day excursions to Liverpool from Chester in the two open-toppers, with a tour of the city included in the price. Page 11.

■ **Go-Ahead Northern's Metro Taxis** subsidiary has accepted a substantial out-of-court settlement from the North East Regional Health Authority after the RHA terminated its non-emergency transport contract. Page 13.

COACH AND BUS EVENTS:

- PTRC Summer Annual Meeting 1992. September 14-18, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Tel: 0702 557266.
- Comex 92, mobile communications exhibition. September 22 to 24, Wembley. Tel: 081 778 3343.
- Omnibus Society Meeting: Brian Fisher - The Plymouth Experience. September 29. London Transport, 55 Broadway. Barry Lejeune. Tel: 071 918 3295.
- Community Transport Show 1992. September 24 & 25, Blackpool. Tel: 061 351 1475 or 061 366 6685.
- Showbus. September 27, Woburn Abbey. Contact Ed Goodridge, 5 Benenden Green, New Arlesford, Hants.
- Scottish IRTE '92. October 2 & 3, Edinburgh Exhibition and Trade Centre, Ingliston. Tel: 0786 88415.
- Bus Network Design Course October 5 - 9, Chesterfield Hotel. Ann Burton. Tel: 0527 893991.
- Mitcar. October 14 to 18, Paris-Le Bourget Exhibition Centre, France. Tel: 010 33 1 43 79 06 30.
- Basic Scheduling course. October 19 to 23, Chesterfield Hotel. Ann Burton, QV Associates. Tel: 0527 893991.
- Expocoach 92. October 21-23, International Exhibition Centre, Donington Park. Tel: 0768 881838.

■ BUS

Details out of first UK low-floor bus

By Richard Simpson

DENNIS has revealed details of its anticipated low-floor city bus chassis. The design, designated the SLF, combines a conventional rear end borrowed from the Dennis Lance with ZF independent front suspension and air-operated Girling disc brakes. First step height is 320 mm.

The design is semi-integral. However, unlike some continental designs, no pipework is routed through the ceiling and all chassis-related maintenance can be done from outside.

Dennis bus sales director Roger Heard said: "Operators have expressed concern about two areas of low-floor bus design - cost and complexity. As far as cost goes, our aim is to make the SLF bus competitive on price with existing double

deckers. And we met the challenge of keeping the engineering as simple as possible by using an existing drive train."

The low floor runs for three-quarters of the length of the bus. At the rear, a stepped-up platform supports the last 13 seats over the engine and transmission.

The chassis frame is a new 11.5-metre welded box section structure, delivered complete with outriggers ready for bodying. The use of independent front suspension and disc brakes allows for a wide entrance gangway. Dennis is experienced in these technologies from its development of the Rapier fire appliance.

The 211 bhp Cummins C series diesel drives an

Eaton single-reduction axle via a ZF 4HP500 gearbox with integral retarder and a straight prop shaft. Air suspension and 70mm kneeling is standard; and a centre exit wheelchair ramp is optional.

Mr Heard said: "This illustrates that ultra low-floor buses can be produced without abandoning conventional engineering. This gives bus users the benefit of easy access without giving engineers the problem of complex buses to maintain."

"It also demonstrates that, while low-floor buses are more expensive than conventional single-deckers, they do not have to be priced beyond the reach of operators who see a need for such buses in their fleets."

■ Merseytravel and Neoplan developments, page 7.

■ BUS

Coastline referred to MMC

STAGECOACH subsidiary, Sussex Coastline Buses has been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission after it failed to give an acceptable undertaking to remedy anti-competitive practices carried out against Easy Rider Minicoaches.

The referral follows an Office of Fair Trading investigation into bus operations

in Bognor Regis which found that Southdown, as Sussex Coastline was then known, had operated at a loss with the intention of forcing the removal of local operator Easy Rider from contested routes (*Coach and Bus Week*, March 7).

Director-General of Fair Trading, Sir Brian Carsberg, has referred the case to the

MMC, which now has to consider whether Sussex Coastline's behaviour is or was anti-competitive and, if so, whether it operates or operated against the public interest.

If the MMC finds this to be the case, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has power to order a remedy.

■ COACH AND BUS

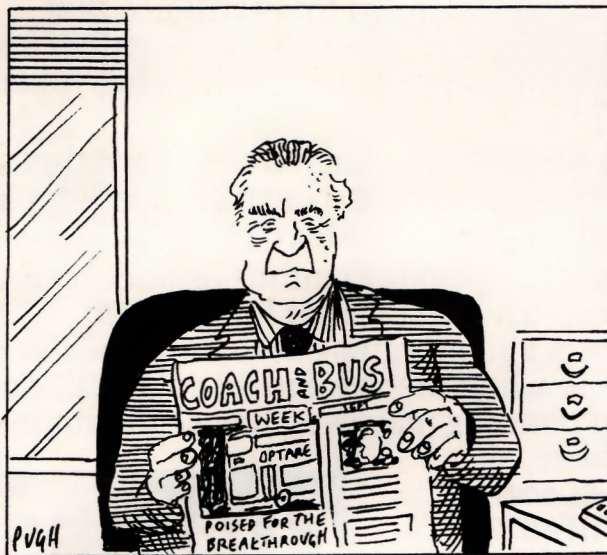
Rhodes sells its bus ops

EAST Yorkshire has bought the nine-vehicle bus operations of Hull independent Rhodes Coaches, just days before its new services were due to start up against Rhodes and Hull City Transport on the Greatfield route.

Charlie Rhodes, who started bus operations just over two years ago, retains his five-coach business and has recently opened a new travel office in Sutton.

■ EYMS coach amalgamation, page 10.

CBW



"THEY MUST THINK I'VE LOST, I'M NOT IN THIS WEEK"

■ COACH

Murder probe plea

DUMBARTON Police have asked coach operators to help with a murder inquiry. A coach seen near the scene of a murder on Tuesday, August 4 at Helensburgh, on the Clyde coast, has still not been traced. Police believe that passengers on the vehicle may have witnessed something which would assist in their search for the killer.

The coach was passing through a residential area of Helensburgh at 6.30 pm on the A814, moving along West Clyde Street at the junction of Sinclair Street, possibly turning towards the car park for a comfort stop. It is a mainly black single-decker with metallic, possibly silver, copper-plate-style signing, one syllable of which is "VAN", which may not have been part of the Van Hool name.

Ring the Murder Incident Room or Dumbarton Police on 0389 62121 if you think you can help.

■ COACH

Receivers move in on Voyager group

By Mark Williams

THE Voyager International group, which includes Impact Holidays - run by Houston Ramm - and Med International, is in receivership.

Ian Stockdale's company has ceased trading and is now counting the cost of a blighted year's trading in a difficult overseas tour market. Voyager's coaching arm is also affected in the closure.

The tour companies in the set-up ran an extensive shuttle operation into Spain and also used four or five French resorts.

Impact and Med International plus operating name Beachcomber targeted the bottom end of the holiday market with long coach hauls and multiple pick-ups en route.

An estimated 2,000 holidaymakers were abroad when the final departures



Voyager International has ceased trading

left Britain on Monday September 7. ABTA bonding insured holidaymakers against insolvency and all are expected to either take their holiday or get refunds from ABTA.

Coach operator Mandales of Penrith worked closely with Impact, providing around 20 departures a week at peak. Vehicles used

were chiefly the eight leased Neoplan Skyliner double-deckers acquired from Voyager last year.

Managing director Ben Mandale said the timing of the crash was fortunately only a week before the end of the season, and off-season work for the vehicles had already been found.

Impact Holidays was

touted for sale for some time before it joined Ian Stockdale's operation.

At that time, it had an unsecured loan from the Royal Bank of Scotland to tide it through its difficulties.

The group is believed to own mobile homes and apartments in the Costa Brava, near Lloret de Mar.

When the announcement that Voyager had ceased trading was made, Club Cantabrica and other operators bargained with ABTA to provide alternative holidays or honour bookings.

Siesta is known to have picked up a number of Med International bookings including new Scottish departures which will form the basis of an expansion by the Hull-based firm next year.

Ian Stockdale was unavailable for comment as *Coach and Bus Week* went to press.

■ COACH

Operator calls for more mercy dashes



Aid workers sort out transport arrangements for refugees on the Austrian-Slovenian border

ONE of the coach operators involved in rescuing hundreds of refugees from what was Yugoslavia has called on the industry to back further mercy dashes.

Richard Fennell, who runs Hastings-based 1066 Coachways, said the conditions at border camps and the shocking state of ousted Muslims brought him to tears: "Some of them didn't say a word all the way back. One child hid under the seat," he said.

Mr Fennell says he has now prepared one of his Neoplan Cityliners with essential equipment for another trip and is asking other operators to donate their time and vehicles to collect more of the 1,200 refugees whom he saw at a single camp on the Austrian border.

The convoy of five

coaches which reached the war zone was led by a Club Cantabrica vehicle carrying Northampton head teacher Gerald Smith. It included coaches from Godsons of Leeds, Strathyre of Birmingham and Wakes of Wincanton.

"I was contacted to supply a vehicle and quoted for the job," said Dennis Wake. "But I thought about it afterwards and decided I wouldn't charge them. The money collected locally should be used to temporarily settle Yugoslavian people."

Mr Wake's Volvo B10M Plaxton made the 2,400-mile trip successfully despite awful weather.

"Most of the families aboard were glad to escape from it all, though they'd all be happier in their own homes," he said.

One of the campaigners for the Wincanton rescue group, Father John McGowan of St Luke's Priory, said both he and the refugees were very grateful for Wakes' generosity.

"The trip was traumatic for all of us. The refugees have a desperate plight. One man couldn't contact his three-year-old son and had to leave him behind. He never stopped crying," he told *Coach and Bus Week*.

"Coaches have been the only form of mass transport to reach the border camps."

Mr Fennell said the fuel and tolls to the border camp cost around £500. In some cases, these costs have been borne by charities and other donations.

Operators in the south east and elsewhere can contact Fiona Alves on 0825 712077 if they can help. **CBW**

■ **GRANADA** has officially cut the ribbon on the first 'privatised' motorway services in the UK - the Thurrock services off the M25. Transport secretary John MacGregor opened the development last week, claiming it would improve standards by introducing competition. The services has a Food Court restaurant, tourist information centre and ferry booking office.

■ **CLOSING** date for applications for the Bus and Coach Council London & Home Counties region's study tour to Mitcar, Euro Disney and Picardie is September 16, 1992. The six-day tour leaves on October 14 and costs £160 per person. Further details are available from John Parkes at Sardinia House. Tel: 071 242 0053.

■ **THE** Community Transport Association's 12th annual exhibition takes place on September 24 and 25, 1992, at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Over 50 firms will be displaying vehicles, passenger lifts, seating, safety systems and other equipment. While from September 23 to 26 the CTA is running a programme of over 60 different training workshops and seminars. Contact Jenny Meadows or Alison Shore on 061 351 1475 or 061 366 6685.

■ **LANCASTER** City Transport has won a supported service linking Lancaster with Settle. Each journey will connect with Pennine's bus service to Skipton, allowing daily shopping trips to the town.

■ **THE** Bus and Coach Council's briefing sheet on crisis control gives pertinent advice to members on how to handle the press if one of their vehicles is involved in a major accident. First on the list is to telephone 071 831 7546 and ask for Crisis Control so members of the BCC's public affairs team can take care of media relations.

■ **JAMES** Freeman, managing director of Badgerline Rapid Transit, will give a presentation on Guided Light Transit to the Institute of Highways & Transportation at Huntingdon. This will be followed by Mr Freeman taking the GLT roadshow to the influential PTRC conference in Manchester, the Light Rapid Transit Association in London and the Institute of Traffic Administration in Bristol.

BUS

No sale to SYT workers

By Andrew Jarosz

SOUTH Yorkshire politicians have confirmed their refusal to sell SYT - Mainline to its employees (*Coach and Bus Week*, September 5) after a meeting between trade union officers and leading councillors from the region's districts.

Workers had hoped to persuade the politicians to

pressurise South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority, the sole shareholder of SYT, to make the company over to an employee buyout before the December deadline for employees to stay in the Local Government Superannuation Scheme.

Instead, councillors have agreed to help the 3,200 SYT staff to find a private pension fund with equally

good returns.

A Transport and General Workers Union spokesman said: "We are still disappointed that they are refusing to sell the company before December 31. But they have said that, if we cannot find as good a deal, then they may re-address their decision."

● SYT-Mainline is one of the companies on the Gov-

ernment's list of locally-owned companies which can continue to use the Local Government Superannuation Scheme if it completes the sale before the end of the year. No further buyouts are being approved, and the Government is thought to be planning to end the preferential status of employees being allowed a head start over an open market sale.



SYT staff have been promised a pension equal to LGSS

Need for route number code agreed

SOUTH Yorkshire Transport has given a guarded response to the peace initiative over route numbers issued by South Yorkshire PTE (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 15).

SYT has agreed to the need for a code of conduct and has written to the PTE agreeing to further talks and discussions. At the moment the company has instigated

legal proceedings against four independent operators in Sheffield to dissuade them from using identical route numbers to its own.

The PTE has said that, although there is no concrete policy for allocating route numbers, it would like operators to come to an agreement embodied in a code of conduct.

It insists on its right to allocate numbers to supported services, but also feels that the route number denoted a common line of route between two points irrespective of operators.

SYT operations director Keith Moffat thought more input was required to remove confusion for passengers. "Once we've got the legal

action out of the way, we're quite interested in talking about a code," he said.

Mr Moffat thought service numbers should indicate a particular service of a particular standard.

"Our view is that confusion is caused when different buses from different companies all use the same service numbers."

COACH AND BUS

DVLA's last call

NON hire-or-reward drivers of large passenger carrying vehicles have until the end of the month to claim PCV entitlement. Such individuals include workshop and depot staff who drive out of service buses and coaches on road test or placing runs.

Before September 30 these drivers must either apply for a provisional PCV (category D) licence and pass the PCV test, or apply for restricted PCV entitlement to continue driving large buses not for hire or reward.

The procedure for this is to obtain and complete the following:

- A D2 application form.
- A medical report form DTp 20003 completed by a doctor.

● A form DTp 20005 giving evidence of substantial and relevant experience of driving large buses within the last three years.

These forms must be forwarded with the driver's existing licence and a fee of £21 to The Vocational Team, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1BR.

The necessary forms can be obtained from the DVLA, Traffic Area Offices and Vehicle Registration Offices.

Drivers of buses operating under Large Bus Permits issued by the Traffic Area Offices should also obtain restricted entitlement to continue to drive large buses after October 1, 1992.

Non hire and reward drivers of minibuses with up

to 16 passenger seats can continue on their car licences providing they are over 21. Voluntary groups will continue to benefit from the provision of minibuses permits which allow driving for hire or reward under certain circumstances.

Drivers of historic buses over 30 years old can continue to drive these vehicles providing they hold full car licences, are aged 21 or over, do not operate for hire or reward, and no more than eight passengers are carried regardless of the number of seats.

Further details from the Driver Inquiry Unit, DVLA, Swansea SA6 7JL. Tel: 0792 772151 or 783838.

COACH

Two coaches are recalled

VEHICLE recalls by manufacturers during the first six months of this year included two coaches - the Caetano Optimo and LAG Panoramic.

Toyota (GB) Ltd issued a notice covering 371 Optimos built between August 1967 and October 1991. This followed the discovery of insufficient welding on the parking brake, which may crack. Continued use results in lever bending. Remedial action involves fitting a modified part.

Van Hool notified a defect on 1988 to 1990 Panoramics. The space frame body on 62 vehicles may be subject to cracking in the area of the rear suspension attachment. Recall of the affected vehicles requires frame reinforcement. **CBW**

■ BUS

Low-floor initiative

By Mike Morgan

MERSEYTRAVEL is set to launch a major low-floor bus initiative with a five-vehicle 'superbus' circular service in the centre of Liverpool supported by the Government-funded City Challenge scheme.

A decision on the choice

of vehicle is expected before the end of the year with a view to introduction during 1993.

Continental vehicles from Berkhof, Den Oudsten, Neoplan and Van Hool are being assessed, but Scania and Dennis are believed to be potential suppliers and Wrights is building a proto-

type. Consultants, G Maunsell & Partners of Manchester, are to evaluate the buses and are looking into alternative ways of funding the service beyond its initial stage.

The Merseytravel tendered route will link landmarks within the Liverpool City Challenge area includ-

ing the University, Cathedrals, rail stations and the new coach station planned for 1993/4.

Principal planning officer, Norman James, said: "The service will offer a full package of improvements including distinctive SMART identity and real-time information."

Neoplan bus for the UK market

NEOPLAN, the German coach and bus builder, has staked a claim for a slice of the embryo UK low-floor city bus market. Sole importer, the National Express subsidiary Carlton PSV, has a left-hand-drive N4014 on a month-long demonstration tour and *Coach and Bus Week* had an exclusive preview of the 12-metre MAN-powered bus before it was unveiled to UK operators at this week's Merseytravel low-floor exhibition in Liverpool.

Merseytravel is following London Transport with a tender for low-floor buses after evaluation of available vehicles. British-built buses have not been ruled out, but none was available for the demonstration where the Neoplan contender was lined-up against Dutch and Belgian competition which has already been seen in this country from Berkhof,

Den Oudsten and Van Hool.

Although the Neoplan shares similar driveline components with the other vehicles, it features a transverse-mounted vertical engine linked to ZF five-speed gearbox and angle drive.

Its 350 mm entrance and 350 mm floor height is achieved by a specially developed low-frame drive axle with offset 80° hypoid differential and a steering axle with independent suspension. Although the origin of this design goes back much further, the low height and wide gangway follows a decisive breakthrough in 1987.

The MAN D 0826 LOH-07 six-cylinder in-line engine has turbocharger and after-cooler to achieve a power



Neoplan is hoping to crack the British low-floor market

output of 169 kW/226 bhp at 2,400 rpm and a torque rating of 850 Nm/627 lbf ft at 1,300-1,600 rpm.

Our short test drive confirmed the N4014's low noise levels and the impressive access achieved with a 1,350 mm entrance width coupled to a rapid nearside kneeling ability which can be optionally linked to the front door control. A low window line is designed to give all passengers, including those in wheelchairs, a clear view.

Carlton PSV managing director, Roger Dixon, is confident the Neoplan initiative is worth while. He said: "It is not surprising that the low-floor bus is cur-

rently being seriously evaluated as a real contender for use in UK towns and cities: not only by operators, but more significantly by an increasing number of authorities where there is a growing appreciation that environmentally-friendly, state-of-the-art vehicles can play a significant role in not only stemming the current decline in urban bus patronage, but actually encouraging greater utilization of buses by the old and the disabled."

Mr Dixon is confident Neoplan can respond quickly to demand for an rhd vehicle within the £125-135,000 price range quoted by other manufacturers.

■ BUS

New Palatine II marks takeover

NORTHERN Counties has marked its passing into management ownership with the release of an artist's impression of its restyled all-aluminium double-decker bus body.

Three orders have already been secured for the

Palatine II, which will initially be offered on the Leyland Olympian chassis, and sold alongside the existing vehicle range. The first Palatine II off the production line will be available to operators for demonstration from March 1993. **CBW**

Countybus
Palatine II



First vehicles will be available next year

■ TWENTY-one people were killed and 30 injured when a German Setra 300 was hit by a car near the Black Forest. The Vogtman coach hit a crash barrier and rolled on to its side.

■ SOUTH Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive is installing new bus shelters and stops in Doncaster. The shelters are well lit and many contain built-in payphones. Every bus stop is to get a name plate and an information carousel. Each shelter or stop will be checked at least weekly for minor repairs and cleaning.

■ HARRIS Bus has won the contract to operate two Easy-bus wheelchair accessible routes in Brentwood and Thurrock. A pair of full DiP-TAC, wheelchair lift equipped TVP tri-axle midibuses will run the Essex County Council supported services, which form part of the council's Making People Mobile policy.

■ TRAFFIC flows in London hardly changed between 1980 and 1991, according to the latest Department of Transport statistics. In contrast, traffic growth between 1976 and 1989 was about one per cent per year. The decline in inner London traffic speeds appears to have been arrested, with the average speed actually increasing by 1.5 miles per hour. Around 70 per cent of daytime street-parked vehicles in inner London were commercials.

■ STAFF working on light transit and other rail transport systems are covered by new laws on drug and alcohol which make it an offence to work on a rail or tramway while unfit through drink or drugs, or exceeding a prescribed alcohol limit identical to that in the Road Traffic Act of 1988. The law comes into force on December 7, and maximum penalties are a £5,000 fine and six months prison.

■ ANDERTON Services on the M61 has been re-named Rivington, after well known local landmark Rivington Pike. The name marks the transfer of the site to new owner Pavilion and its improved customer services and facilities. The 33-acre services first opened in 1971.

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- 1989 F DAF SB2305DHTD Plaxton 3200 lowdriver, 57
- 1987 E DAF MB230 DFKL Plaxton 3200, 52 + toilet
- 1987 D MB230DKFL Duple 340, 53R
- 1987 D DAF SB2300DHS Plaxton 3500, 49R + toilet
- 1986 D SB2305DHTD Plaxton 3200, low driver, 55E
- 1986 D DAF MB200 Plaxton 3500, 49R + toilet
- 1990 G SCANIA K93 Van Hool, 51R + toilet
- 1985 C SCANIA K1123 Jonckheere P599, 51R + toilet
- 1984 A SCANIA K112 Van Hool Alizee, 51R + toilet
- 1986 C BEDFORD YMPS Plaxton 3200, 35R
- 1983 Y BEDFORD YNT, 12m Duple Dominant, 53
- 1981 W BEDFORD YNT, DUPL DOMINANT II, 53
- 1987 D BOVA FUTURA, 49R + toilet
- 1985 C BOVA FUTURA, 57R
- 1979 T AEC 760 Plaxton Supreme, 53

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COACH AND BUS

Coach sales recovery

REGISTRATIONS of new coaches made a dramatic upturn this August, according to figures released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. Seventy-one new coaches were put on the road in time for the new K-registration prefix - an increase of 69 per cent on August 1991.

But the full-size bus market, which tends to be less driven by the August boom, remained in decline. Thirty-three units were registered, compared to 39 in August 1991, and sales for the year to date at 305 are 26 per cent down on 1991's gloomy total.

However, the midibus segment is healthy, with 48 Dennis Darts and 11 Optare MetroRiders being put on the road and the overall market for PSVs, excluding van-derived vehicles, is now four per cent up on this time last year.

By Richard Simpson

The market as a whole remains dominated by Volvo, with 526 registrations so far this year. But the Swedish manufacturer is seeing its market share shrink as former Leyland vehicles disappear from the line-up and the market switches away from double deckers such as the Olympian - although the British-built decker retains its position as the most popular big bus in Britain by the thinnest of margins over the DAF SB220LC saloon. Eighty-seven of the Leylands have been registered so far this year, compared to 86 DAFs.

In the coach market, Volvo continues to dominate with the B10M, which sold more than three times as many as the nearest rival - its Leyland Tiger stablemate. Dennis is also doing

comparatively well, having pushed sales of the Javelin underframe from five in August 1991 to nine last month.

The bus version of the B10M had a good month too, with 10 units sold. It was narrowly beaten in the sales stakes by Scania's N113DR, with 11 registrations making the Swedish decker the best-selling bus of the month.

The remainder of the year may see double-decker bus registrations recover slightly as the Optare Spectra - tested in this issue - starts to make a statistical impact. Its introduction could also help chassis supplier DAF topple Leyland from its position as number one in the big bus market. Supplies of the Lynx saloon have almost dried up, and the DAF SB220LC, whether bodied by Ikarus or Optare, is certainly reaping the benefits.

COACH AND BUS REGISTRATIONS AUGUST 1992

	August 1991	August 1992	% share	YTD 1991	YTD 1992	% share
Manufacturer						
Volvo	55	62	34	526	690	46
Dennis	43	57	31	302	420	28
DAF	19	14	9	104	167	12
Scania	0	14	8	99	122	8
Optare	15	11	6	87	94	6
Renault	0	0	0	0	16	1
MAN	0	2	1	0	15	1
Iveco	0	0	0	1	3	0
Duple	1	0	0	3	3	0
Other British	0	0	0	4	0	0
Other imports	23	31	17	127	121	8
TOTAL	184	163	100	1487	1432	100

FULL-SIZE BUS REGISTRATIONS AUGUST 1992

	August 1991	August 1992	% share	YTD 1991	YTD 1992	% share
Manufacturer						
Leyland	18	6	18	143	115	38
DAF	13	6	18	55	86	28
Scania	0	11	33	64	43	14
Volvo	8	10	30	99	33	11
Dennis	0	0	0	49	27	9
Iveco	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total double/d	16	14	42	213	127	42
Total single/d	23	19	58	197	178	58
TOTAL	39	33	100	410	305	100

FULL-SIZE COACH REGISTRATIONS AUGUST 1992

	August 1991	August 1992	% share	YTD 1991	YTD 1992	% share
Manufacturer						
Volvo	12	30	42	290	291	46
Scania	0	3	4	35	79	13
DAF	6	5	7	49	77	12
Leyland	15	9	13	118	71	11
Dennis	5	9	13	16	28	5
Setra	0	2	3	17	23	4
Bova	3	1	1	12	12	2
MAN	0	2	3	3	7	1
Duple	1	0	0	3	3	1
TOTAL	42	71	100	580	627	100



Boon's new Van Hool DAF

COACH

Quality is key to success

THE small but high quality fleet run by Boon's of Boreham has been enhanced by the arrival of the operator's first DAF-chassied vehicle in 48 years of operation.

The Van Hool Alizee DH body is fitted to an SB 3000 DKV underframe with ZF eight-speed gearbox. Its specification includes a centre continental door, demountable toilet, twin monitor video system and a

drinks machine. Seating capacity is 49/53.

Proprietor Hector Boon said: "In the late 1980s I could see the coach business going downhill fast. Rather than trying to compete on price, I decided to go for high-class work with high-class vehicles."

Boon's fleet now consists of four Setras and two Van Hools on tour programmes in the UK and Europe.

COACH AND BUS

Bodybuilding ends at PMT

PMT of Stoke on Trent has confirmed that it has no intention of returning to the bus-building business in spite of a recent upsurge in vehicle orders and an apparent lack of capacity at some body manufacturers.

Financial director, Nigel Barrett told Coach and Bus Week that there was no possibility of reversing a decision taken last November to phase out production at PMT Engineering.

"It's a bit of a pity," he said. "Our last design, the Ami, was a really good product, and would have held up well in the market, but we found we didn't have the capacity to deliver the sort of

quantities that customers were looking for."

PMT started bodybuilding with Mercedes conversions during 1986, when the National Bus Company was allocating a bulk order of 609D 20 seaters to its subsidiaries. Manufacturing developed into PMT Engineering, bringing out its own series of design for short and long wheelbase minibuses and the Knype design for the Leyland Swift.

Mr Barrett said: "Irrevocably is not a word in the PMT dictionary, but we could only build four vehicles per week and customers wanted them in dozens."

He claimed that there



Ami production over

was a certain stigma attached to the company for being a bus operator.

PMT at one time diversified widely and owned a taxi company, travel offices, filling stations and coach operations in Birkenhead and London. These have all since been sold and the company is concentrating on the core business. But a small coach operation which includes National Express Rapide coaches is still flourishing as is the Flexi minicoach hire fleet.

CBW

■ BUS

Bus war tactics defended

By Mark Williams

VISCOUNT has defended its tactics in the Peterborough bus war with Fen Travel.

Managing director of Viscount, John Tate, admitted issuing two-way radios to drivers but said they were needed to "ensure the maximum level of service to passengers."

Fen Travel's managing director, Ralph Garrett, had claimed they were used to keep a Viscount bus in front of his.

"Yes, we are duplicating on some routes just as Fen Travel are," said Mr Tate. "But I would resent any suggestion from Mr Garrett that this is somehow improper."

Mr Tate said the challenge has had a good effect

on Viscount employees: "Personally, I haven't had as much fun in years," he said. "Staff morale is excellent, and the competition has been great for corporate unity."

He said Viscount, a Cambus Holdings subsidiary, would continue to match Fen fares, though the fluorescent stickers which said so have now been taken off the Viscount fleet.

"The passenger gets what he or she pays for. With Fen Travel, you get very secondhand buses. I have heard that Mr



Fare stickers have been removed

Garrett boasted that his entire fleet cost less than one of our new Leyland Olympians. I think that says it all.

We have seven new Marshall Ivecos coming next week, and West Midlands Travel can make 80 MCWs available to us if needed."

The quality message has been underlined to passengers in an autumn newsletter which has pictures of Viscount's depot, with its buses neatly arranged, and Fen's unprepared Ryhall depot on the front cover.

There has, as yet, been no sign of Fen Travel's registrations to serve the Bretton township of Peterborough, and Mr Tate says his company's estimates of Fen's profitability suggest the current services to Orton and Werrington may not be sustainable.

"We are losing some of our profit," he said. "Our estimate of Fen Travel's operation is not one which will give any backer cause for comfort."

He said claims, in local newspapers, that his drivers were less courteous did not worry him: "Our surveys have demonstrated that 85 per cent of our passengers are wholly satisfied. I'd like the figure to be 95 per cent, but it's not bad."

■ COACH

EYMS amalgamation

AMALGAMATION of the EYMS Group leisure operations took place last week involving the two small operating subsidiaries Cherry Coaches and Cottingham Mini Coaches, with the coaching operations of East Yorkshire and the rail charter business Rail UK.

Headquarters for the new

operation, renamed East Yorkshire Travel, has moved to the Springfield Way depot at Anlaby, formerly the base of Cherry and Cottingham.

General manager Graham Rogers is assisted by operations manager Norman Duggleby, who remains at the Anlaby base, which has been totally refurbished with

an enlarged workshop area which now caters for up to three coaches at a time, out of the enlarged fleet of 33 vehicles.

The East Yorkshire depot in Hull loses its coach allocation to Anlaby with the exception of the Volvo Expressliners which operate Rapide services.

The move frees space and operating licences for an increased bus allocation which is used on competitive Hull city services.

Mr Rogers said the move made logical sense of the various forms of coach operations. "We are now looking for a new livery to go with the new identity, so that the blue and white colours are not confused or associated with the blue and white buses of Hull."



Cherry's has been amalgamated into East Yorkshire Travel

■ BUS

Customers to voice opinions

GM Buses is launching a series of public meetings around its operating area to ask the customers what they think of its services and give them the opportunity to cross-examine staff.

Town centre locations have been booked at 13 district centres and meetings kicked off this week at Swinton, Stockport and Sale.

Senior members of the management team are present at all meetings where the public is being invited to air their views and, at most

locations, staff will be available to deal with passenger inquiries from 4pm until the meetings start at 7pm.

GMB managing director Dr Alan Westwell said the aim was to determine customers' attitudes to services and to respond to any issues or concerns.

"Only by talking to our customers can we hope to become sensitive to their needs and provide them with as relevant and attractive a service as is possible," he said.

■ BUS

Prosperity depends on park-and-ride system

BUS priority and park-and-ride schemes have been recommended in phase two of a report on public transport in Dundee.

TPA consultants says the future prosperity of Dundee depends on successfully combining the needs of public and private transport users in the city over the next ten years. It recommends a public transport system that can be incrementally introduced, starting

with a low cost, easily implemented scheme, which could be added to and enhanced until it becomes a full, upgraded public transport system.

Ultimately this would mean a guided bus system.

Traffic projections for Dundee show a 45 per cent increase in the morning peak hour by the year 2010 if growth is unrestrained and 38 per cent if restrained.

CBW

■ BUS



Metrorider has been uprated for Norway

Metrorider launch in Norwegian market

OPTARE has launched an attack on the Norwegian market with an uprated version of its MetroRider midibus. The Optares are to be sold by the company's United Bus partner, DAF Norge.

Two versions of the vehicle were shown to operators at the recent Hellarud Exhibition - the two-door Line-Bus and the single door InterCity.

Both vehicles feature a 145 bhp turbocharged Cummins B series engine with an output of 145 bhp, a 30 bhp increase on the naturally-aspirated unit fitted to UK spec vehicles.

Other features to suit the vehicle for operation in Scan-

dinavian conditions include a heated air dryer for the braking system, tinted double glazing, heavy duty thermal and sound insulation, a driver-controlled combustion heater with convector radiators and heat exchanger units, side and front impact panels, roof ventilator/escape hatch, driver's swivel seat and roof-mounted intake/extractor fans.

Interior fittings include VBK luxury seating, cord interior trims, non-slip floor covering with shark tooth edgings and yellow saloon handrails.

Both vehicles comply with the very stringent Norwegian safety legislation.

■ BUS

Chester goes to Liverpool

By Andrew Jarosz

CHESTER City Transport, already under pressure from Guide Friday in its home city, has expanded its open top activities by launching a Liverpool City Tour.

Operated by two open toppers on a half-hourly frequency, the 50-minute tour departs from the Albert Dock and is guided by a team of locally recruited blue badge guides.

CCT has expanded its open-top fleet to six by converting two V-reg deckers, some of which have a 'wet weather dome' at the front of the vehicle.

A team of nine drivers and guides officiate on both the 'original Chester Tour' and the new tour and dead running to and from Liverpool is limited by the introduction of a day return excursion from Chester which includes a sightseeing tour in the price.

CCT traffic manager John Lee said the new service was taking off steadily. "As with all new ventures, it



Chester's Liverpool Tour is operated by two open-toppers

takes time to become known but, during the Tall Ships visit, our patronage was marvellous," he said.

Mr Lee claimed that Chester City Transport had accumulated a great deal of expertise in devising and developing its first city tour, since challenged by Guide

Friday of Stratford, and was anxious to expand into other areas.

"There are a few aspects of fine tuning and marketing which we still have to get right but we're ready to expand into new markets if we see the opportunities," he said.

■ COACH

Javelins for COMS

CITY of Oxford Motor Services has replaced ageing double-deck Metroliners on its popular Oxford to London Citylink 190 service with six new Dennis Javelins.

The Javelins are fitted with ZF 5HP500 automatic transmissions driven by 240bhp Cummins C-series engines and carry Plaxton Premiere bodies. All 53 reclining seats are covered in Oxford Citylink moquette specially designed by Ray Stenning of Best Impressions.

The new coaches replace Metroliner double-deck



The Javelins replace Metroliner double deckers

coaches which have operated the 190 service since 1985.

Since their introduction, the Metroliners have operated over six million miles on the Oxford to London ser-

vice.

The current 190 Oxford to London, Victoria service runs every 20 minutes during most of the day. Cheapest fare is £4 with a multi-journey Faresaver ticket.

■ COACH

Berkhof is the MAN for the job

LEN Wright's AVE Berkhof coach dealership is to extend its range of chassis by offering the MAN 16.290 HOCL 12-metre chassis for delivery in 1993.

Available with both the Berkhof Excellence 1000 and Excellence 2000 bodies, the latest chassis is powered by a 290bhp MAN six-cylinder turbocharged engine driving through a ZF six-speed gearbox. Air suspension, antilock braking, Telma retarder and 180 amp alternator are fitted as standard.

AVE Berkhof already sells the smaller sister of the MAN 16.290, the 11.190 which is the chassis for the Berkhof Excellence Midi 35-seat coach. Prices for Berkhofs

built on the 16.290 will start at around £126,500.

Maurice Bateman, AVE sales administration manager, said the company had no firm orders for the new vehicle at present, "but we're talking to a lot of people at the minute."

● Applebys of Louth, Lincolnshire has ordered another three Excellence 1000 and one Excellence 2000HL (for its Halcyon Holidays division) bodies on Scania K113 chassis. Applebys now runs 13 Berkhofs.

Lucketts Travel of Fareham has ordered two Excellence 2000 Scania and one 36-seat Excellence 1000 on a 10-metre Dennis Javelin.

CBW



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■ BUS

Merseyrider into the fray

MERSEYSIDE Transport's new low-cost subsidiary Merseyrider started operations last week with nine buses and drivers on Merseytravel and Liverpool City Council contracts won in the recent tendering round.

Incorporated as a separate subsidiary of Merseybus, the company is managed by Gary Crane, formerly with independent Liver Line, from a separate depot site in Blackstock Street, Liverpool.

Company chairman Alan

By Andrew Jarosz

Coleman, business development manager for Merseybus, said the company had specific objectives in the tendered market. "We didn't mind other private operators winning tendered services but they then infilled peak workings with commercial competitive services against Merseybus."

The company now competes on an equal footing using lower-paid workers

and a low-cost base but has no intention of taking over commercial work from its parent company.

Unemployed staff have been taken on in a unique partnership with Merseyside TEC, which contributes towards the cost of training. Nine 12-year-old Willowbrook-bodied Leyland Atlanteans have been acquired from Merseybus because Merseyside PTE specifies a 15-year-age limit for buses on tendered services.



Nine Leylands have come from Merseybus

Mr Coleman predicted further expansion for the company as it competed for more tenders. "We have a

licence for 31 buses and will obtain DiPTAC-equipped buses if necessary for future work," he said.

■ BUS AND TAXI

GAN wins settlement over ambulance work

GO-Ahead Northern's Metro Taxis subsidiary has accepted a substantial out-of-court settlement from the North East Regional Health Authority following legal action, after the RHA terminated a contract for non-emergency transport services.

The contract, which was

awarded in 1988, led to the formation of Metro Taxis and was operated both by black cabs and Transit minibuses from the main bus fleet. The contract proved successful and was subsequently extended.

In its extended form, however, it was unprofitable because the number of

patient journeys predicted at the time the contract was let did not materialise and frequently fell 25 per cent below target.

As a result, a mid-term price increase was sought, and shortly after the ambulance drivers' strike the contract was terminated in 1990, and re-awarded to the ambulance service.

GAN took legal action for the termination, partly because Northumbria Ambulance Service failed to correctly identify the numbers of patient journeys available in the contract documents, and partly because the RHA was unwilling to increase journey prices at the annual review.

Alex Nelson, general manager of Metro Taxis, said that, despite the loss of the ambulance contract, the company had developed as one of Newcastle's leading taxi companies.

"The company provides hospital transport services for Newcastle Health Authority in addition to private hire car services to all the major hospitals," he said.



Metro has developed as a leading taxi company

■ BUS

Rider launch for new route

RIDER York's newest bus route has been launched with a plethora of special offers and a ceremony performed by the Lord Mayor of York and the chairman of Ryedale District Council.

The service from Walmgate Bar to Clifton Moor serves suburban communities not usually linked by one route and operates half hourly at peak, two hourly off peak, with an experimental Saturday evening facility.

The company introduced a special 20p fare for

the first day with all proceeds being donated to the children's ward at York District Hospital.

"It's an opportunity for people to test the convenience of the service, to shop at the three superstores en route, on the last day of the school holidays," Peter Dew, commercial manager of Rider York, said.

Special offers at Megabowl and Warner Cinemas were also publicised to lift the profile of the route.

■ COACH AND BUS

Jolly Roger pulls off York park-and-ride

ROGER Flatt, owner of Jolly Roger Coaches of Pocklington, has surrendered his park-and-ride contract to York City Council, after winning it at Easter.

Having bid for £85,000 for the Clifton Moor service (Coach and Bus Week, May 2), Mr Flatt claims that he was expecting a passenger bonus as is operated on the

other park-and-ride service to Askham Bar.

Without a bonus, he thinks the service is losing him money, and will cease operating it this month.

Jolly Roger has already deregistered the former Acomb Link commercial service which was launched in York during the summer.

CBW

■ COACH AND BUS

Crypton wins VI approval

CRYPTON has won Vehicle Inspectorate approval for its PSA 300 programmable smoke analyser for both diesel cars and heavy vehicles.

The PSA 300 is programmed via a credit card style card which contains the software to govern the test procedure, the limits and the pass or fail diagnosis. If the test procedure should be changed, the unit can be updated easily and cheaply.

With its 12-volt power supply and weatherproofing, the PSA 300 is suitable for use outside, and options include a 15-metre smoke head lead to ease work with buses. Price of the standard unit is under £3,000.

Contact FKI Crypton Ltd, Bristol Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 4BX. Tel: 0278 424300.

■ COACH AND BUS

Rozzone guide

ROZONE, the maker of the VI-approved ASA 200 smoke meter, has published a guide to diesel engine emissions. **Environmental Control for Exhaust Emissions** explains the basic mechanics and chemistry of diesel combustion, and the environmental advantages and disadvantages of it against the petrol engine.

It takes the reader through the official procedure for measuring exhaust smoke, and then describes the working of the ASA 200 itself.

**Contact Rozone Ltd, Darlaston,
PO Box 10, Booth St, Wednesbury,
West Midlands WS10 8JD. Tel: 021
526 3131.**

■ COACH AND BUS

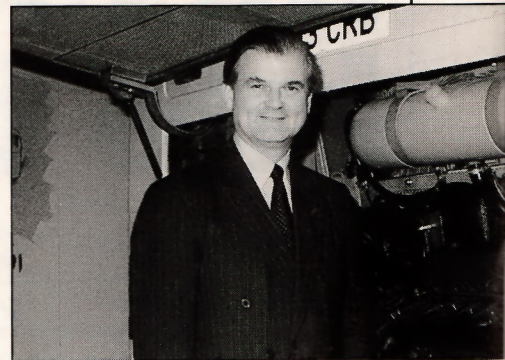
Smoke meter MoT is launched

By Richard Simpson

local air quality."

The standard required to pass the new smoke test will remain unchanged for the present but it will be kept under review and revised periodically to reflect the ever more demanding standards expected of new vehicles.

Vehicles which fail the smoke test, either in the annual MoT roadworthiness tests or at roadside spot checks, may be prohibited from service.



Mr Freeman

The public has been advised to report individual buses, coaches and trucks emitting excessive smoke to local Traffic Area Offices, who are instructed to follow them up.

■ COACH AND BUS

Voluntary test available

OPERATORS concerned about the new metered smoke test for PSVs and HGVs can submit vehicles for the procedure at Vehicle Inspectorate test centres on a voluntary basis. For £7.50, the VI will run a vehicle through the smoke test, which forms part of the new MoT test introduced this month (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 22).

Customers will be given a print out showing the actual smoke levels recorded, along with an indication of whether the vehicle meets the MoT requirements as tested. This will en-



The test should end scenes like this

able them to take remedial action where required before submitting the vehicle for a full MoT test.

The VI will also arrange local

demonstrations of the equipment and test procedures.

Vehicles are allowed up to 10 accelerations to meet the standard, but the average of four or more accelerations must be at or below the limit to pass - ensuring that the engine has stabilised at an acceptable level.

Until the end of November, failure on diesel emissions at annual test will be treated as a free retest item, and operators will have 14 days to have the vehicle adjusted.

Contact your local test station for details. **CBW**

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Bonding: take it to the top

THERE is only a slight difference between the fatalist, who accepts everything that comes as preordained, and those who do not like what they know is coming, but leave it to others to raise the objections.

In the context of the EC Directive on Tour Packaging and Bonding; while the coach industry may be divided on the general desirability of controls and bonding, I am sure that the vast majority share my concern that we are being placed in an impossible situation by being told that we will have to comply with legislation after January 1 1993, the content of which is, as yet, unknown to us - and is now unlikely to be approved by Parliament before mid-November.

Some coach operators may have accepted that this is one of

the grim and bare facts of European life; others go no further than leaving the protests in the hands of BCC and ABTA. That we can be so lethargic about such an important issue, on which there is so much ammunition at our individual disposal, is amazing.

Consider the facts: this Directive was first produced in draft form as long ago as 1988. It was two years before the final version was produced on June 13 1990. Then 13 months elapsed before the UK consultative paper saw the light of day on July 24 1991. Six months after that, the draft Regulations to cover only Articles 1 - 6 emerged. Finally, in March 1992 a further consultation document

was published on the specific, and important 7th Article - Bonding.

So, more than four years after conception, we still hope for a draft Regulation on bonding some time in early October, allowing but a short period for observation if it is to even be laid before the House by mid-November.

As the proposed implementation date is January 1 1993 this will leave us six weeks, perhaps less, in which to comply, or face criminal sanctions. In the course of almost five years deliberations, politicians appear to have not grasped that packages are often assembled a year in advance, and brochures printed up to six months before the actual passenger holiday

takes place.

These facts seem to me to be quite compelling reasons to suggest to Members of Parliament that the implementation date of this legislation should be put off for a year.

I do not accept the inevitability of the tide of EC legislation, nor do I think it fair to expect BCC to be banging this particular drum single handed. If we care enough to shout enough we may make noise enough for reason to be heard. So I have written along the lines laid down in the panel to my MP and urge others of like mind to write now in similar terms to theirs.

It is surely worth a few minutes and the cost of a stamp to at least make a wholehearted attempt to have adequate time to read, understand and act upon this legislation.

Your MP's address is: House of Commons, London, SW1.

Marksman's letter to his MP

“ This autumn Parliament will be asked to approve The Package Travel, Package Holiday and Package Tours Regulation 1992. This will implement EC Directive 90/314, a measure designed to bring package holidays within the scope of consumer protection, including provisions to ensure the security of payments made by consumers for packaged holidays and tours. This company, and the industry generally, is supportive of these principles.

“However, it is a matter of great concern that, although the draft Directive was published as long ago as 1988, the consultative process in this country did not commence until July 1991 and, at the time of writing has not yet been completed - for the most essential part of the Regulations, that relating to tour bonding, has not yet been published in draft. The final Regulations are, therefore, not likely to be law before mid-November 1992 and this is only weeks from the planned implementation date of January 1 1993.

“This is hardly fair or realistic. It is quite

normal for coach operators to conclude contracts with hotels 12 months in advance and to publish brochures six or more months before the dates on which consumers may actually take the holiday. Furthermore, staff and selling agents will need instruction in correct customer-handling techniques to comply with the new legislation; the obtaining of a bond at the level required by Regulations will take some time as well as having a financial implication for which pre-budgeting has not been possible; and it has to be questioned whether about six weeks (which includes the Christmas period) can possibly be sufficient time for the establishment of the necessary regulatory framework - without which this legislation will be hollow and meaningless.

“Therefore, notwithstanding the terms of Article 9 of EEC 90/314, I earnestly ask that you seriously consider putting off the implementation of this Regulation for 12 months.

“In support of that request, I would remind you that the majority of consumers of UK hotel

bed spaces and of many tourist attractions are there as a result of buying a package which would be within scope of this legislation. Any falling off of availability of such packages as a result of coach operators withdrawing from this market because of inability to conform with packaging legislation within the available time-scale would have an adverse effect on employment in both the coaching and tourism industries. It would also increase the use of cars for these sort of leisure activities, thereby compounding traffic congestion on roads going to, and at, holiday destinations.

“Finally, I would suggest that, although the need for consumer protection might militate against any delay in bringing in these provisions, the fact is that the failures of the travel industry in this country to honour its promises to its customers have been spectacular rather than frequent.

“I, therefore, hope you may conclude it is more important to do it right rather than to do it quickly.” **”**

Albatross ad was a flight of fancy

ALBATROSS Tours is thinking of going into coach sales with the bizarre vehicle which appeared in its ad two weeks ago (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 29).

Operators raised an eyebrow at this coach - a single-deck hi-liner with two sets of windows and extra mirrors - when it appeared. To be truthful, the coach exists only in one of our graphic artist's imagination.

Of course, a coach which obscures the middle section of its occupants may have its uses... perhaps as a vehicle for conveying nudists, or dog owners who want to be sure Fido has a good view of the passing countryside from floor level.

And the garb of the driver - peaked cap and doorman's jacket - will simply not catch on...

First it was the sunbeds

FAR be it for us to be racist or xenophobic about anyone, even if some Germans do have a tendency to display these very same characteristics themselves.

Have you ever heard us moaning about "how disgusting it is that good British holidaymakers are forced to sunbathe on concrete because THEY'VE nicked all the sunbeds?"

However, we can't help thinking they've gone too far this time. Just imagine what it would have



been like if they'd won the war.

As it is we have to put up with them bringing their coaches over here without so much as a hint of

"Excuse me, sir, that will be 0.7p per passenger per mile to wear out our tarmac", to say nothing of high interest rates, and pavements cluttered up with coaches all over the place, or was this driver creating a new definition of "kerb crawling" in Princes Street, Edinburgh?

Our thanks to TW Rowley of Stoke-on-Trent for this photograph.

A membership form for the Home Guard will be winging its way to you shortly.

When is a door not a door..?

PASSENGERS in Glasgow are well used to the multicoloured range of colour schemes that the city's competing bus operators offer, particularly as regrouping of former SBG subsidiaries produced an exchange of vehicles where only a vinyl sticker distinguished buses belonging to different companies.

Variety has now come to the orange Strathclyde fleet, following the Larkfield depot fire, with vehicles loaned by other operators carrying an intriguing mix-

ture of original colours and orange in various permutations.

Most unusual of all are the two-door Ailsas loaned by Tayside Buses, which have their centre exits closed off with notices saying: "This is not a door, no entrance".

Thus the Celtic answer to that well-known conundrum, "When is a door not a door?", must be: "When it's on a Dundee bus in Glasgow!"

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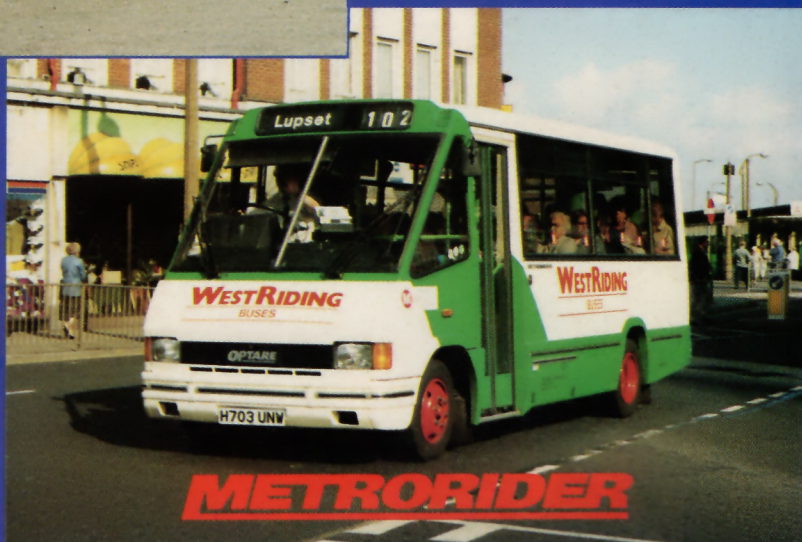
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As we say in our headline - With Action Service Europe from Volvo Bus, **our** operators can be sure of finding "the right people, in the right place - all the time".



Road test was too easy on TurboCity

From Richard Delahoy

SIR

Your road test on the Iveco/Alexander double decker (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 8, 1992) makes interesting reading, although I thought you too easy on some of the more bizarre aspects of the body design. As for the front end, is that really the best that 30 plus years of designing bodies for rear or underfloor-engined chassis can come up with?

I was also disappointed, but perhaps not surprised, to read your criticism of the location of the ticket machine and cash trays.

Given that almost all new buses these days will be one person operated, there is still too little thought given to the driver's needs here - and I'll bet that there was no adequate provision for a farechart!

The bodybuilder who comes up with a design that makes sensible provision for a farechart of up to A4 size, and throws in a holder for a cup or a can of coke, will earn my undying thanks. Meanwhile, thousands of drivers will continue to put their farecharts on the dash instead, obscuring the warning lights.

Finally, I was surprised that you did not make more comment on the fuel consumption figures. In these days of high diesel prices, threats for the fuel duty rebate and environmental concerns about the waste of scarce resources, do you really think that a shade over six mpg is good enough, especially on a test route that was probably a lot less demanding than most urban OPO services?

It will certainly be interesting to see whether the Iveco/Alexander combination does tempt oper-

ators to part with their hard-earned cash

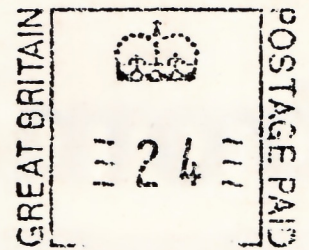
Richard Delahoy
272 Shobury Road
Southend on Sea
Essex
SS1 3TT

● You will find the Optare Spectra test in this issue, pages 25-27, makes an interesting comparison.

The Iveco TurboCity was the second in our summer series of in-service bus tests, and the first double-decker.

While I agree with your comments on driver amenities, it must be remembered that both TurboCity and Spectra are demonstration vehicles which have not been built to an operator's specification.

Meanwhile, judgments on fuel consumption figures need even more care because mpg from bus operation is determined by so many variables other than the vehicle.



Write to: The Editor,
Coach and Bus Week,
EMAP Response Publishing Ltd,
Wentworth House,
Wentworth Street,
Peterborough,
PE1 1DS,
or by fax: 0733 62656

The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach And Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our own information.

Although many operators are becoming fuel economy conscious, most are more concerned about whole vehicle life costs (basically reliability and down time). The most fuel-efficient bus need not be the cheapest to operate over 10-15 years.

Deputy editor

So it isn't like selling shirts or beans?

From David Wayman

SIR

You say that running buses is "a service industry which is very unlike that selling a shirt or a tin of beans" (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 29).

That is interesting! Eight years ago Nicholas Ridley (as he then

was) went on record as asking why running a bus service should be any different from running a sweet shop! And of course, it is now history that the Transport Act 1985 was rushed through on that basis, with the minimum of consultation and with deaf ears turned to the soundest professional advice (just like so much other legislation since 1978).

But, if what you say is right, does it follow that the '85 Act is not only flawed but based on a faulty foundation? And if it is, would you be speaking for most of your readership if you were to make loud campaigning noises to the Government, pointing this out and suggesting that new and more appropriate legislation might bring about greater benefits to users

(and non-users) than the shambles so often reported in your pages, arising from the unstable, uncoordinated, fragmented, unreliable and expensive system we have at present?

David Wayman
Convener
Oldham Transport Users'
Forum
Oldham

Operators must serve customers responsibly

From B G Garner

SIR

Having read Mr Mennear's letter (*Coach and Bus Week*, August 8) regarding Blackett Street in Newcastle, I thought it necessary to clarify the situation.

Like Mr Mennear, I too believe that bus passenger needs require due consideration in the planning process. However, I also believe that it is essential that operators serve their customers in a responsible manner and acknowledge that a planning authority is subject to a wide range of sometimes conflicting priorities in determining their overall strategy.

These general points are pertinent to Black-

ett Street since bus flows in the street increased from 54 per hour prior to deregulation in 1986 to 183 earlier this year at a time when overall patronage fell by approximately 20 per cent. These major increases in bus flows were linked much more to on-street competition between operators than passenger demand and were undoubtedly a major factor in the congestion problems identified by the city council.

Progress has however been made, in addressing these problems. Following discussions between operators, the PTE and the city council, operators have agreed to withdraw certain services from the street reducing total flow to 157 per hour. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, they have also agreed a code of conduct removing all layover from stops within Blackett

Street. This code is monitored and enforced by PTE uniformed staff. In the five weeks since its introduction there has been a perceptible improvement in traffic and environmental conditions in Blackett Street.

Finally, the city council has indicated that it will not be pursuing its application for a traffic regulation condition provided the improvements achieved since implementation of the code can be sustained.

B G Garner
Chief services co-ordinator
Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport
Executive
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear



Car speedometers inaccurate

From Malcolm Bridges

SIR

So many operators get problems with motorists who accuse their vehicles of speeding that I would like to draw their attention to a recent test of a Mitsubishi 3-litre sports car.

The magazine which tested this car with radar discovered that, at a real speed of 70 mph, its speedometer indicated a stagger-

ing 88 mph. A situation in which the driver of this car is overtaken, downhill, by a coach pushing its speed limiter hard, those extra few mph could equate to more than 90 mph, in the car driver's mind.

My personal feeling is that this particular sports car should be taken off the road until its speedometer can be adjusted within 10 per cent of real road speed.

If not, I fear a repetition of the

appalling behaviour I heard about the other day.

A motorist overtook a coach, believing it to be speeding, then proceeded to pull in front of it and jam on the brakes. It was very fortunate that the National Express passengers aboard were not injured.

Malcolm Bridges
Coach driver
Knutsford
Cheshire

Companies react to competition

From Lomond Macardle

SIR

In visiting Scotland last week, I realised how right Neil Mackenzie of LRT is in saying that bus operators have reacted to competition, not customers.

Mallaig in the Western Highlands, population about 1,000 - two operators competing on the town service (West Highland Motors and Shiel Buses); the Isle of Cumbrae, population about 1,500 - two operators competing on the bus service to the ferry landing (Millport Motors and Cumbrae Coaches). As Neil said: "Buses operate where there are other buses, not where passengers are."

Lomond Macardle
North Tidworth
Salisbury
Wiltshire

How can they turn away trade?

From K Andrews

SIR

I was very pleased to read (*Coach and Bus Week*, September 5) that Pavilion Services is looking forward to welcoming coach passengers at its services. I wish Granada would adopt the same attitude at all its services. Recently we have been told we are no longer welcome on a casual basis for cof-

fee etc at Warminster, Monmouth and other trunk road services as they have now gone upmarket as AJs restaurants. Very often when we called at these services there would be five or six coaches (250/300 people) en route to the south coast, most of whom would call again on the return journey.

How can any company justify turning away this number of people when all are crying out for business? Next we receive details

in the post of new services being opened. I wish they would decide whether they want coaches or not and not try to dictate which ones we can use just as it suits them. I hope they haven't forgotten all these people are customers and at other times travel by car.

K Andrews
Andrews Coaches
Marshfield
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Still time to enter 1992 safety awards

PRESTIGE is attached to the coveted Britain's Safest Driver trophy and the Britain's Safest Operator trophy. These go to the best records in the industry, but the incentive is there for all coach and bus operators to enter the *Coach and Bus Week Telma Safety Awards*.

Gold, Silver and Bronze awards await those with good safety records so do not delay - use the entry form opposite.

All winners receive a specially-embossed certificate as an added bonus. They will also receive artwork incorporating a distinctive campaign logo and the standard of the award won for inclusion on company letterheads etc.

Stickers with similar information will be supplied to place in the windows of winning vehicles.

A panel of industry experts will judge the Safest Driver and Safest Operator awards. The two winners of these top awards will receive a trophy and cash prize donated by Telma Retarder. They will also feature prominently in *Coach and Bus Week*, with front-cover exposure and industry-wide recognition at a special presentation.

It is up to you to enter and you have until October 9 to do so

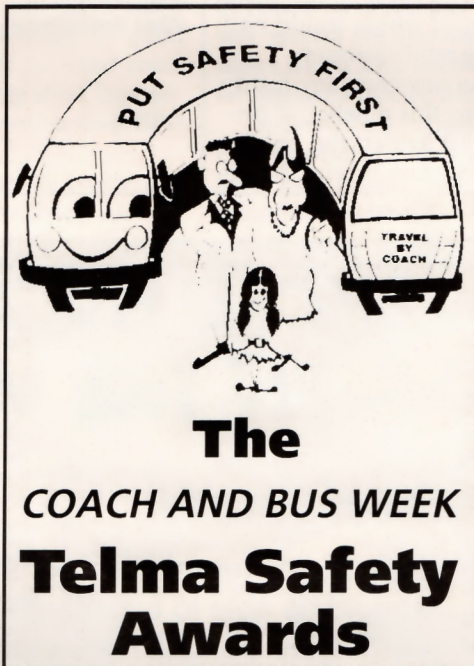
THE AWARDS

The *Coach and Bus Week Telma Safety Awards* are open to all drivers and operators of buses and coaches.

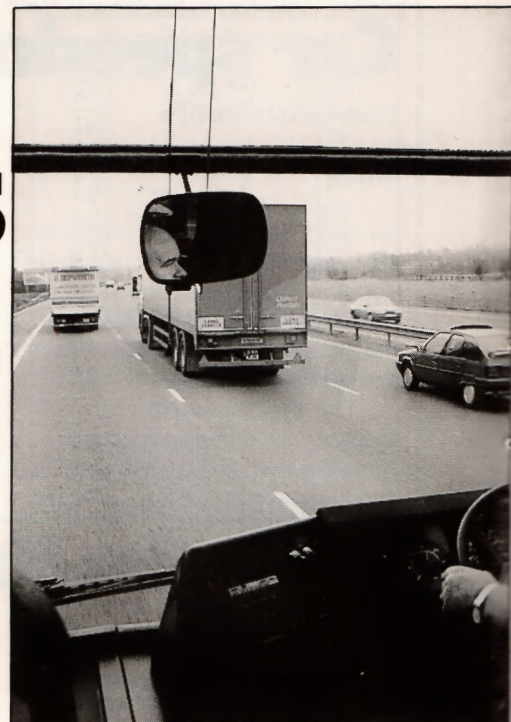
Safe drivers

- Twenty years or more accident-free driving qualifies for Gold

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- Ten years or more accident-free driving qualifies for Silver
- Five years or more accident-free driving



Awards for safe driving

qualifies for Bronze

- Britain's Safest Driver trophy goes to the driver with the best record

Safe operators

Awarded to companies according to a weighted safety score. For example:

Year	Vehicles	Accidents
1991	8	1
1990	8	2
TOTAL	16	3
SCORE	5.33 (16 divided by 3)	

- Gold award for companies with either a perfect safety score of zero or 50 plus
- Silver award for companies with a safety score of 20 or more
- Bronze award for companies with a safety score of 5 or more
- Britain's Safest Operator trophy for the operator with the best record

And remember, all entries will be put into a prize draw and the first ten out of the hat will win a specially commissioned *Coach and Bus Week Telma Safety Awards* prize.

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Name Job Title.....
Company..... Address.....
Post Code..... Tel No.....

Which of the following does your company operate? (please tick)

Local service..... Private/contract hire..... Excursions..... Tours..... Express.....

SAFE DRIVER ENTRY

Name of drivers Years without a third-party accident

(only an unbroken record of consecutive years up to the date of entry will count)

(please use a separate sheet for additional drivers)

SAFE OPERATOR ENTRY

Name of company.....			Name of company.....		
Year	Vehicles	Accidents	Year	Vehicles	Accidents
1992	1982	.....	.....
1991	1981	.....	.....
1990	1980	.....	.....
1989	1979	.....	.....
1988	1978	.....	.....
1987	1977	.....	.....
1986	1976	.....	.....
1985	1975	.....	.....
1984	1974	.....	.....
1983	1973	.....	.....
TOTAL	TOTAL	.....	.....

OPERATOR SCORE (for office use only, calculated by the judges)

Total number of vehicle/years divided by total number of accident/years

Name of vehicle insurance company or underwriters..... Tel:

Signed..... Date.....

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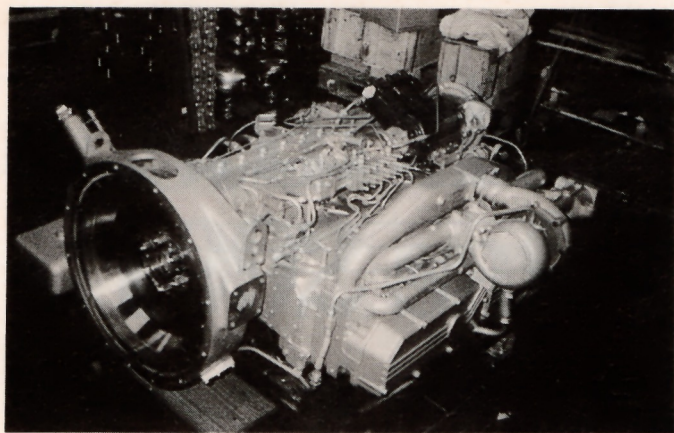
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1987 (D) SCANIA K112 PLAXTON 3500. Telma retarder, 51 seats, centre toilet, video system, water boiler, double glazed with curtains, steps and cont. door.

1987 (D) LEYLAND TIGER 260 DUPLÉ 340. 48 recliners, rear sunken toilet, boiler, fridge, video, cont. door.

1986 (C) DAF SB2300 DHS PLAXTON PARAMOUT 3200. 49 recliners, sunken toilet, single glazed.

1986 (C) VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE, 49/53 seats, centre toilet, TV and video, courier seat, blinds.

1985 (C) DAF MB 230 LAG GALAXY. High floor, 49/53 demountable, sunken rear toilet, TV & video, boiler, bunk, double glazed, Webasto, carpets & curtains, retrimmed throughout in brown. Finished in white.

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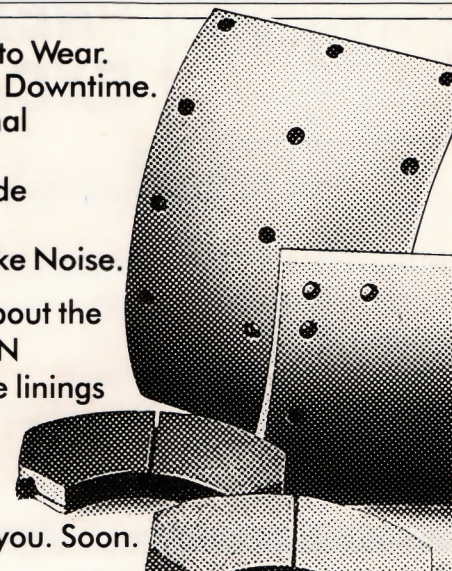
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Setting the pace

Optare's trendsetting double decker, the DAF-based Spectra, is put to the test with full loads in local service. Mike Morgan takes the wheel



The Spectra takes double-deck style into the 1990s

A VERY good reason for buying a new bus is that passengers notice it and want to ride on it. However, it is doubtful if the average bus passenger is able to distinguish between a seventies and an eighties double decker.

The great technological advances taking place all around left the humble bus relatively untouched. Come to that it was equally difficult to identify a product of the current decade until along came Optare with its trendsetting new decker design.

With its parentage firmly established in the highly-acclaimed DAF-based Delta and its smaller, but surprisingly slow-selling, MAN-based Vecta, the Optare decker for the 1990s - and beyond - was guaranteed to be an exciting prospect.

When unveiled for the first time at the NEC last year the bus, now named Spectra, certainly lived up to expectations.

The clean lines are fresh, the attention to detail full of interest and the complete vehicle compelling. However, the real test of anything new is to see how well it copes with the job it was designed to fulfil.

Questions will always surface when a vehicle breaks with tradition. Yet the Spectra is so clearly the product of fresh thinking that it turns those questions round on their head. Why has double-deck design taken so long to emerge from the constraints of yesteryear?

Why have passengers been condemned to noise, smell and harsh ride? In fact - why is the public image of the bus so downmarket?

Our test placed the Spectra in service on Chester City Transport's highly successful number 3 park-and-ride service. While not an intensive stop-start operation, this high-frequency route carries full loads of critical shoppers to a tight schedule.

It gives ample opportunity to assess vehicle performance and passenger reception without becoming embroiled in the trials of timekeeping and route learning or the complexities of fare and stage structures.

Chester gives an excellent opportunity to learn about the vehicle on test in traffic with passengers.

Passenger impressions

Other than the prototype running with Reading, this was the first time the fully developed Spectra carried fare-paying customers. Their response was an unqualified thumbs-up.

Seven times we took standing loads into the city centre and each time the comments were glowing. Perhaps the best accolades were the unspoken ones.

Passengers faced with a drab, wet Wednesday trip to the shops suddenly found the experience held a touch of excitement. Once seated they looked around with a star-struck gaze that is usually the province of visitors to EuroDisney.



Entrance is low and wide

itors to EuroDisney.

Most spoke in awe of the smooth, refined ride quality - no pitch, no roll - and the very quiet performance.

Particular praise was reserved for the exceptionally wide 1200 mm entrance and its low first step with illuminated leading edge - very user friendly, even without a split height arrangement.

At 325 mm this step is so good that the 100 mm suspension kneel was largely superfluous because the difference between kerb and bus is insignificant. Kneeling could be switched in automatically if desired.

Grab rails - 35 mm DiPTAC type - were plentiful and well located throughout the bus, including the central U-shape bar in the doorway.

"Superb" was the verdict. And the criticisms? Only one. The lack of a used ticket box. Because of the variety of operators' requirements Optare failed to provide this fairly basic amenity. But if that is all our random sample of over 400 found, then this really must be an exceptional bus.

An interesting phenomena was the way the lower deck filled first before people ventured upstairs. While a social commentary on top-deck travel, it also reflects passenger expectations.

They are unaccustomed to a ride upstairs that is every bit as pleasant as that downstairs. For those who ventured up the forward ascending staircase there were some surprises.

Although they probably failed to notice the one-piece glass fibre staircase with its easy-clean corners, the park and riders experienced bus travel elevated into the luxury class.

Optional soft trim emphasised the effect but the confirmation came from comfortable Lazzarini seats, superb forward vision and exceptionally low noise levels.

The *Coach and Bus Week* meter discovered a class-topping score which pointed to the Spectra in motion being quieter than most living rooms. With a low of 60 dB(A), at no point did levels in the upper saloon ➡



The lower saloon has a blind back

← exceed 67 dB(A).

In the lower saloon the instrument hovered around 70 dB(A). The only intrusion came from a pronounced transmission whine - characteristic of the right-angle drive configuration.

Build

The secret behind Optare's success lies in the acclaimed Alusuisse construction, which produces a rigid easy-to-repair structure, allied to a purpose-built chassis with rear gangway forming part of the strength, together with a deliberate policy of isolating the engine and passenger compartments.

The bus has been designed from the bottom up and is consequently far removed from

By UK industry standards the 272 bhp 9 NOx power unit is high revving - peak power at 2,300 rpm and maximum torque at 1,400 rpm though, throughout our day-long test, it did not feel or sound stressed. On the contrary, its torque characteristics accounted for an impeccable performance - nippy but without racetrack pretensions.

To the passengers the choice of engine remained pleasantly encapsulated at the rear. Only the "new-generation" windowless back suggested something unusual.

When covered in soft trim the consequence is to darken this area of the bus. While passengers and drivers alike will come to terms with restricted rear vision, the enlightening effect of a hard trim alternative can be recommended.

Back at the drawing board the designers had good reason to delete the rear window. Behind a lift-up flap is the air filter and the header tank, leaving space in the engine compartment.

Spaciousness is a theme which emerges from our experience with the Spectra. Wide entrance and excellent circulation area are matched by a large cab - even when fitted with a highly commended air-conditioning unit.

Exceptional headroom in both saloons shows the benefit of low 540 mm chassis height and a very thin intermediate roof between decks which forms an integral part of the Alusuisse structure.

With only 71 seats, legroom was generous and provision for shoppers' baggage very adequate over the front nearside wheelarch.

Incorporated in this feature was a very sensible and quickly appreciated pushchair rack - well worth the seating capacity sacrifice.

The cab air-con unit is just one example of the vehicle's high-spec fittings. Listing luxury options has long been the province of coach road tests where the continental influence has been established for many years.

Now it is the turn of the bus. In-cab comforts are no

longer a luxury. Like their touring coach counterparts, the local bus service driver spends a long time at the controls. Gone are the days of the quick round trip followed by a cup of tea in the canteen. Now it is a full shift followed by backache if the cab is badly equipped.

Our test Spectra had the best seat/steering wheel combination to be found anywhere. The steering column adjustment is air controlled. As long as the bus is stationary a foot pedal release allows a wide range



Upper saloon noise levels w

of height and rake settings.

The range and simplicity of the system is superb - as is the 10-metre turning circle. On test was a Grammer air-suspension seat. Its comfort is perfect. Not only has it a full range of adjustment but, thanks to its automatic load-adjusting set-up each driver is seated at an optimum height.

Although further high-tech benefits await the driver, the passenger has not been ignored. Suspension kneel is rapid, easy to control and eminently usable.

Large clear destination displays are an object lesson in the art of passenger information. This SF system uses conventional roller blinds controlled and one-touch electronic control. For both decks the same Dutch company has supplied large advertising screens - used during our test to extol the Spectra's virtues.

Although not required during some unseasonal weather, tinted side glazing is standard and a comprehensive Purmo heating system ensures a warm welcome and a positive selling point in a competitive environment. However, a powerful demister and the clean sweep of the wipers were invaluable.

A driver's eye view

By designing the Spectra as a whole, rather than thinking of two separate parts, the result is the feel of an integral. This comes across strongly in the cab. Although the dash has been lifted out of the latest 95-Series DAF truck, it looks as though it belongs to the Spectra. There are no annoying reflections and all the instrumentation and switches are clearly labelled, sensibly clustered and immediately to hand.

However, the dash is high to achieve these desirable ends and inevitably the result is a compromise between visibility and reach. First impressions are one of being seated too low and, despite the deep windscreen, visibility in traffic is restricted by the bulk of the dash.

In all other respects forward vision is very good and driving is aided by well-positioned mirrors - though the lack of a rear window requires extra caution when reversing.

Driver's supervision of passengers - excellent in the entrance area - is further



Dash is lifted from the DAF 95-Series truck

the MCW Metrobus. True, Optare and its United Bus partner, DAF, used the Metrobus as a base, but all that remains is the rear axle and suspension layout.

Consequently the Spectra drives and feels like an all-new vehicle - it represents the new generation. The front end of the DAF chassis is the same as the SB220 used in the Delta whereas the rear houses the Spectra's "green" credentials with state-of-the-art 8.25-litre engine mounted transversely in a conventional layout.



a whisper-quiet 60-67dB (A)

aided by the closed-circuit television monitor for up-stairs surveillance. At a touch of the button it was very easy to establish the state of play on the top deck, particularly when watching to see if all 44 passengers had disembarked before cancelling the tickets of boarding customers.

Wayfarer ticket machine position and cash-handling arrangements were not ideal. The machine stand needed to be turned towards the driver to avoid reflections which became worse with the cab light on.

Both are easily rectified, but the cash tray and provision for change giving needs careful re-thinking with more space needed between driver and cab door.

Another perennial driver's grouse raised its head. With nowhere for the time sheet, fare table and the occasional drink there was plenty of justification to obscure instruments or windscreen - neither desirable.

Performance

Once on the move the Spectra is as much a pleasure to drive as it is to ride in. Yet there were two areas of possible consternation for the ill-prepared driver - stopping and starting.

DAF's braking shares the continental preference for firm pressure. It works very well - but not without a very heavy push. Relationship between accelerator and foot-brake is ideal and the in-built retarder comforting. It's the next bit that needs some practice - a comfortable stop.

Having successfully stopped, the NBS system in the ZF gearbox does its job. NBS means 'neutral at standstill' so the bus is not in gear when stationary. Consequently, if the bus is held by the footbrake on an upward slope and the pedal is released, the bus has a propensity to move backwards - not like a conventional automatic box. The answer is don't panic, use the handbrake.

The NBS also needed respect when manoeuvring in tight places. Stop with the footbrake and it quietly slipped into neutral. Release the brake and it engages gear again causing the bus to lurch forward a few inches if you are not careful.

A second advanced feature from ZF is its EST 18 control which adjusts gear changes to suit the load. This is it did brilliantly and

SPECIFICATION

Chassis:	DAF DB250
Body:	Optare Spectra 71 seats plus 14 standees
Price:	1992 standard bus spec (not as tested) - £108,000
Engine:	8.25-litre turbocharged six-cylinder DAF HS 200 GBO 9 NOx mounted transversely at the rear
Power:	272 bhp (200 kW) @ 2,300 rpm
Torque:	707 lbf ft (960 Nm) @ 1,400 rpm
Gearbox:	ZF Ecomat 4HP 500 E four-speed automatic with EST 18 and NBS (neutral at standstill)
Steering:	ZF hydraulic power assisted - height and rake adjustable column with pneumatic lock
Brakes:	Full air front and rear Front: drums Rear: drums Handbrake: spring release
Retarder:	Hydraulic retarder built into gearbox operated by foot brake
Suspension:	Full air with kneel facility
Drive axle:	GKN D66-11B - ratio 4.7:1
Tyres:	275/70R x 22.5
Options:	ZF Ecomat 5HP 500 E and 60 mph speed limiter Voith D854.2 and ABS (top speed 70 mph) 4.17-metre (13ft 8in) low-bridge bodywork dual entrance/exit doors

DIMENSIONS

Length:	10.1 metres
Width:	2.5 metres
Height:	4.32 metres (14ft 2in)
Wheelbase:	5.05 metres
Unladen weight:	11,360 kg
GVW:	17,000 kg

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration:	0-30 mph - 13 secs 0-40 mph - 18 secs 0-50 mph - 29 secs
Gear	ratio speed
1st	3.59:1 (With EST18)
2nd	2.11:1 the optimum
3rd	1.49:1 gearchange is
4th	1.05:1 determined by
Rev	5.07:1 the load)
Fuel economy:	Average consumption - 7.47 mpg
Total distance -	138 miles
Fuel used -	18.47 gallons
Range with 208-litre tank -	343.62 miles
Noise levels at 40 mph:	Cab - 70 dB(A), Lower saloon rear - 76 dB(A) Upper saloon average - 62 dB(A)

made the Spectra a very smooth vehicle to drive.

A spin-off from this added sophistication should be reduced wear on the gearbox and engine plus improved fuel economy. Overall consumption on test was 7.47 mpg which, for an 11,360-kg bus carrying 85 people for half its journeys, is a good result.

Nevertheless, Optare's sales manager Chris Wise stresses the importance of calculating vehicle costs over its operating life. Reliability and economy of repair are important parts of the equation.

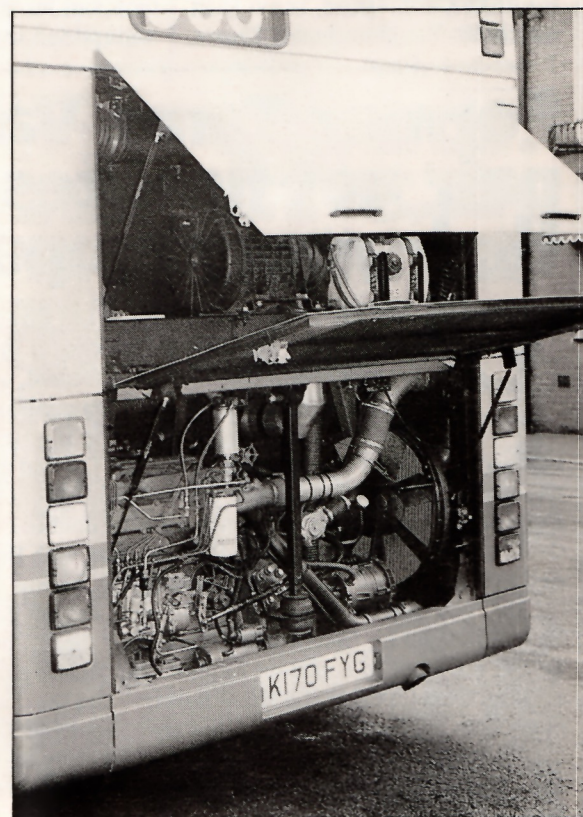
Mr Wise says that the Alusuisse structure with quick repair outer panels offers savings to the operator. Vulnerable lower panels are strong enough to resist minor damage while these aluminium cladding panels can be removed speedily and new ones slotted into place. Front and rear corner panels are GRP and individual light units are used for economy of repair. The vehicle is designed for minimum downtime.

Verdict

Drivers will rapidly appreciate the Spectra's virtues and once familiar with its brakes, gearbox and seating position, will wish other manufacturers would take the same track.

Equally, the passengers on our test found this latest product from the Optare stable very agreeable and it is they who will pay for the privilege. Once they've travelled on this bus they are sure to know an old bus when they see one.

Without doubt Optare and DAF together have established a lead that injects new life into the double-deck market. Make no mistake, others will be forced to follow.



Upper service flap gives access to air filter and header tank

Style gets go-ahead for three vehicles

**YOUR WEEKLY
REPORT ON
LAW AND THE
COACH AND BUS
OPERATOR
BY MICHAEL JEWELL**

GEOFFREY Vaughan's Valeplain, trading as Style Travel, of Bilston, has been granted a licence for a year at a Birmingham public inquiry authorising the operation of three single-deckers and a minibus.

The hearing of the company's application for a new international

Commissioner John Mervyn Pugh said he was worried about an allegation by Mr Jones that Mr Vaughan changed the name of Chameleon Travel to Bilston Travel

al licence had previously been adjudged by West Midland traffic commissioner Mr John Mervyn Pugh after complaints from Link Line, of London, that a previous company with which Mr Vaughan was involved owed them money. (*Coach and Bus Week*, July 25).

For Valeplain, Norman Carless said that Link Line's managing director Brian Jones was saying that Chameleon Travel, in which Mr Vaughan had a 25 per

cent interest, went into liquidation last year owing Link Line £15,000.

The liquidation had been the proper thing to do, but Mr Vaughan had been a little concerned as an upturn had begun to show in the company's fortunes. Its premises had proved to be too expensive and it had moved into cheaper accommodation. Some time later problems arose over the lease, and there was a problem over £14,000 rent which precipitated the liquidation.

The Valeplain accounts showed a healthy position. Modern vehicles were being operated, two on lease and one on lease/purchase.

Mr Pugh said he was worried about an allegation by Mr Jones that Mr Vaughan changed the name of Chameleon Travel to Bilston Travel.

Mr Vaughan said that had been done by the major shareholder of that company, Peter Celie-Bone.

The commissioner said Valeplain had been using the licence identity discs issued to Chameleon Travel and pointed out that they could only lawfully do that for 14 days, but Mr Vaughan said he had understood that they could oper-

ate for six months. The vehicles were being operated in the name of Bilston Travel, as that was the name the licence was in. That licence was going to be surrendered.

In reply to Mr Pugh, Mr Vaughan said that the other working director in Valeplain, Carl Shevyn, was in charge of their office down south. Mr Pugh said the situation

Mr Pugh said the situation was unsatisfactory in that Mr Vaughan had been having various financial problems with previous businesses and in certain places had got himself a bad name

was unsatisfactory in that Mr Vaughan had been having various financial problems with previous businesses and in certain places had got himself a bad name. That had led to Mr Jones alleging that Mr Vaughan was switching from company to company.

Asked whether Link Line was going to get its money, Mr Vaughan said it was nothing to do with him. It was another company.

Mr Carless said peace seemed

to have been made with everyone who had been owed money apart from Mr Jones. He understood that Mr Celie-Bone was now operating a travel company and the other creditors had been given work that had satisfied them.

Saying he thought the fairest thing was to grant a one-year licence, Mr Pugh suggested that, when the company was in profit, Link Line be paid to get Mr Jones off Mr Vaughan's back.

He said that, when the licence was renewed, he would want full accounts for the trading year ending December 1992, draft accounts for the following six months, and estimated budget forecasts.

He would also like all the vehicles except the one that had recently passed its annual test to have fresh MoT tests, as the recommended maintenance system only worked if vehicles were in A1 condition to start with.

Mr Vaughan said they operated continental shuttle services and it was in their own interests to maintain their vehicles to the highest standard.



Former Tame Valley pair get licences for their new companies

FORMER Tame Valley Travel Ltd directors Alan Hodnett and Stephen Morris were successful in obtaining licences for new companies they have formed, when they appeared before West Midland traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh at a Birmingham public inquiry. Alan Hodnett's Tamworth-based Bonustream Ltd had applied for an international licence for four single deckers, and Stephen Morris' Frontline Enterprises Ltd a national licence for nine double deckers and a single decker. Asked about his possible connection with Burman Ltd, Mr Hodnett said he was not moving in Burman's way, he was moving out.

Mr Pugh said he was sorry Mr Hodnett was not going to Burman's as he had thought he "might be the redeemer there", but Mr Hodnett said he did not want to comment on that. Mr Morris said he had bought a minibus from Cumberland Motor Services and the double deckers would come from the pages of *Coach & Bus Week*, dependent upon price.

Mr Pugh said someone had told him recently that they had bought some marvellous double deckers from Bournemouth.

In granting the licences, he said he had wished them more success in the future than in the past. Mr Hodnett said a lot of work had gone for nothing.



Drink drive coach driver sent to jail

COACH driver Terrance Long has been jailed for two weeks for a drink driving offence. Appearing at Horseferry Road Magistrates Court in central London, Mr Long, from Perranporth, pleaded guilty to being drunk in charge of a coach. Stipendiary magistrate Terence Maher was told that an off-duty policeman had spotted him trying to start his National Express coach at Victoria Coach Station after drinking with other drivers.

For the prosecution, Gerry Wareham said there was only one passenger on board the coach at the time. Mr Long was taken to a police station where a breath test showed he was within two points of triple the limit. Defending, Anthony Moore said Mr Long had turned to drink three years ago after his marriage broke up.

Sentencing Mr Long, and banning him from driving for 18 months, Mr Maher said that, with the weight of the coach, he might as well have been driving a bomb. "You put yourself in charge of a lethal weapon and posed very grave dangers to innocent members of the public."

"I have to impose a short immediate custodial sentence to reflect the truly horrendous nature of this offence."

Mr Long was advised to join Alcoholics Anonymous on his release.



Millerships fined £2750 for using unqualified drivers

CHRISTOPHER and Mary Millership, trading as Gordon's Coaches, of Rowley Regis, and the firm's transport manager Gordon Millership, were ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £2,950 by Warley Magistrates after admitting employing unqualified drivers.

Christopher and Mary Millership each pleaded guilty to 11 offences of permitting drivers to drive PCVs when not qualified to do so. Gordon Millership pleaded guilty to two similar offences. Christopher Millership also admitted offences of failing to use a tachograph chart and of failing to display an O-licence identity disc.

Four allegations that Gordon Millership had caused a driver to make false entries on tachograph charts were dropped by the prosecution.

Kathryn Young, for the prosecution, said it was conceded that the four charts concerned were false, in that driver Maurice Whitehouse had put Mr Millership's name on the charts. However, Mr Whitehouse was now saying that he had done so on the direct instructions of somebody else and not Mr Millership.

Kathryn Young, for the prosecution, said a particularly serious aspect of the case was that the firm had allowed unlicensed drivers to drive coaches carrying pupils

The prosecution followed a fairly lengthy investigation by two police officers covering the period of June and July 1991. The O-licence was held by Gordon Millership's wife and son, but he governed the day-to-day running of the business.

Mr Millership was not able to hold an O-licence himself as he had previously been declared bankrupt. A particularly serious aspect of the case was that the firm had allowed unlicensed drivers to drive coaches carrying schoolchildren.

Mr Whitehouse had been employed for a matter of weeks. On June 8 he drove a 20-seater minibus from St Ives in Cornwall

Christopher and Mary Millership each pleaded guilty to 11 offences of permitting drivers to drive PCVs when not qualified to do so. Gordon Millership pleaded guilty to two similar offences. Christopher Millership also admitted offences of failing to use a tachograph chart and of failing to display an O-licence identity disc

to Birmingham, carrying a number of senior citizens. Mr Whitehouse held an LGV driving licence but that did not cover him to drive a minibus.

Frederick Slater was employed as a mechanic and did not hold a PCV driving licence. He had driven a coach on a school outing.

Carole Hardwick had taken a party to Haydock Park Races. Gordon Millership had attempted to hide that from the police by saying she was only using the minibus to take a spare wheel out to a coach that had had a puncture. However, the organiser of the trip had stated that Miss Hardwick was the driver.

Stuart Macklin had driven coaches and minibuses on numerous dates between July 12 and 26. Gordon Millership was fully aware that Mr Macklin did not hold the required licence.

He had done a Llandudno tour, carried mothers and young children to Telford and had taken a school trip out.

On July 26 police were told Mr Macklin had taken a vehicle out on road test. The vehicle was subsequently discovered being driven by Mr Macklin in Smethwick carrying a party of children and adults.

Brian Hadley had taken a wedding party to Stourport and Bewdley when not the holder of a PCV driving licence.

Christopher Millership was seen by police in Wolverhampton driving a 20-seater minibus taking a party to and from swimming baths. There was no chart in the tachograph and no O-licence disc displayed in the windscreen.

He told police he had forgotten to put the disc into the holder. He was unable to give any explanation why it should have been removed in the first place.

He had said that he was not using the tachograph as it was a regular service he was undertaking on a benevolent basis and that the firm was not getting paid for it.

Inquiries of the organisers

showed that they were expecting to pay for the trip, said Miss Young.

Defending, Geoffrey Davies said that in 1985 a customer, who owed £22,000, "took Gordon Millership down" and he was forced to go bankrupt. The business rose like a phoenix from the ashes, with his wife and son becoming the licence holders. Gordon Millership carried on being actively involved as a bone fide employee of his wife and son.

Mary Millership had little to do with the business in any practical way, and had it been a limited company there would have been one set of charges and not two. However, permitting unqualified drivers to drive was an offence of absolute liability and the buck stopped with Christopher and Mary as the employers.

Mr Whitehouse had taken the minibus to St Ives to pick up the OAPs, who had been on a week's holiday. He had been asked to do the trip in an emergency, when the firm was "strapped" for drivers.

It was mistakenly thought that, as it was only a 20-seater minibus, it could lawfully be driven by an LGV licence holder. It had been lawfully driven to Cornwall by Mr Whitehouse, as it was empty, but the offence was committed as soon as passengers boarded.

Mr Davies alleged Mr Slater had worn a PSV driver's badge when he had applied for a job and he had arrived in a coach for the interview.

On that basis, Gordon Millership had believed that Mr Slater held a PCV driving licence. However, in fact the badge belonged to someone else and Mr Millership had been hoodwinked. Mr Slater had been employed as a mechanic and he had only driven in an emergency.

Miss Hardwick had been known to be the holder of a PCV driving licence as she had worked as a driver/conductor on local bus-

es. She had had the most unpleasant experience of being attacked on service. That had badly affected her nerves and she allowed her PCV licence to expire. There were six adults and two children on the minibus and it had been thought they were under the PCV limit. However, it was the number of passengers the vehicle was constructed to carry that was critical, and this had been a 20 seater.

Mr Macklin only worked a couple of weeks as a part timer. He had claimed he had a PCV driving licence but that it had been destroyed in a caravan fire.

Dealing with Christopher Millership's Wolverhampton offences, Mr Davies said Mr Millership had been driving a large coach earlier that morning.

As there were only 12 to 14 children, he took out a smaller vehicle but did not transfer the licence identity disc due to an oversight. Similarly, the failure to use a tachograph chart had been an oversight.

None of the offences were particularly sinister, said Mr Davies, as no one had been put in danger. They were really administrative errors. They were the first charges the Millership family had faced

Mr Davies alleged that Mr Slater had worn a PSV driver's badge when he had applied for a job and he had arrived in a coach for the interview

over the operation of their business and they certainly would be the last. There was now a comprehensive system for checking tachograph charts and driving licences. The firm no longer relied on the word of drivers that they were properly licensed.

Christopher Millership was fined £1,300 and ordered to pay £75 prosecution costs. Mary Millership was fined £1,200 and ordered to pay £75 costs. Gordon Millership was fined £250 with £50 costs. They were ordered to pay at the rate of £1,000 a month after asking for time to pay.



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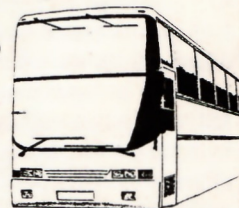
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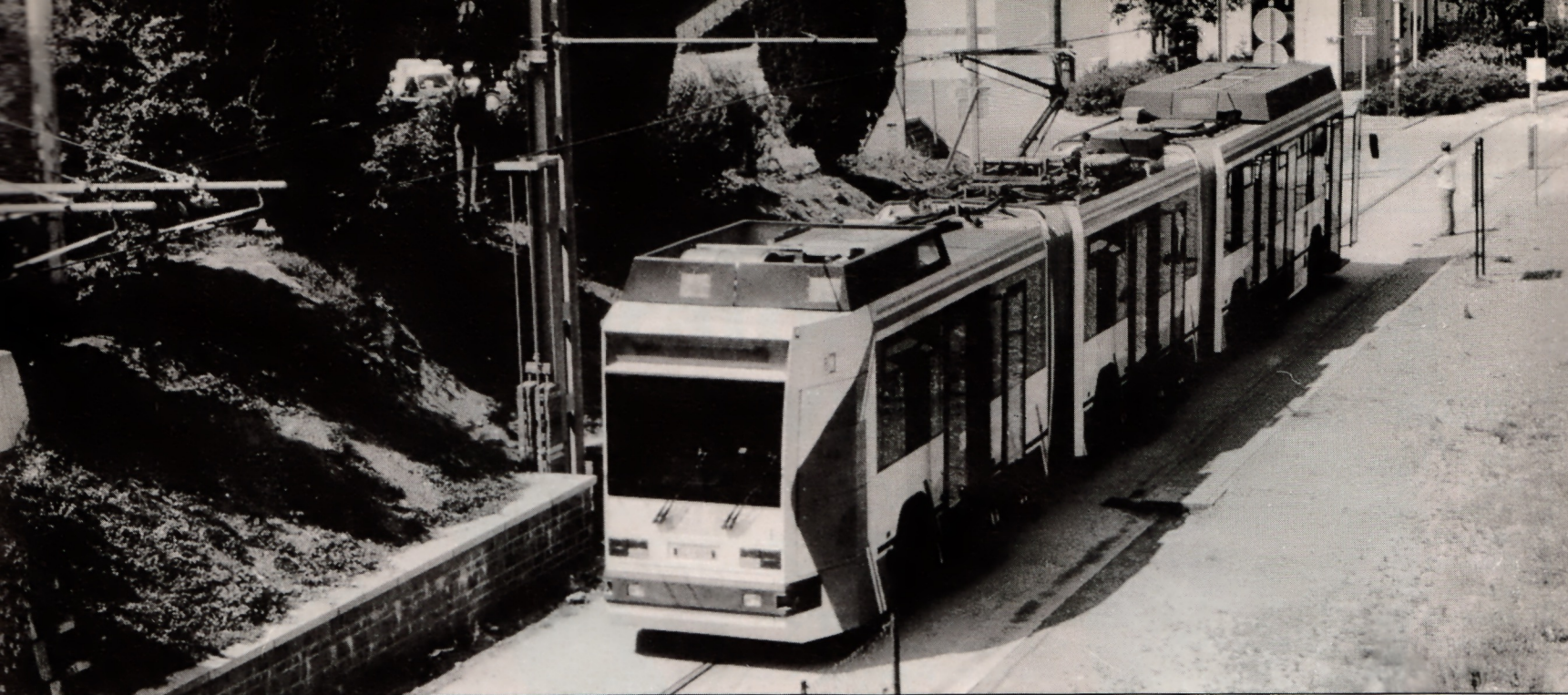
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Belgian manufacturer, BN, will open its Rochefort test route to provide a full explanation and demonstration of its GLT

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Maastricht and the famous RAI Autobus international Bus and Coach exhibition gives the opportunity to view and sample many of the latest European designs of bus and other equipment.

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Visits and discussions with the operators of the Belgium pilot new generation trolley-bus system in Ghent and the Mercedes electric/diesel Duobus system in Essen including sampling of operations and opportunities to ask questions of local managers.

Bus priority and information systems

Eindhoven, Duisburg, Maastricht, Essen and Ghent will be visited to view local bus priority and information system initiatives.

Accommodation on the tour is very limited and is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a reduction for shared occupancy of rooms if requested at the time of booking. A deposit of £100 per person must reach TAS at the address below not later than Wednesday September 30, 1992. Invoices for the balance of the fee due will be sent for payment before the date of the tour.

● All bookings and inquiries must be sent to:

Lynda Simmonds
The TAS Partnership
30 Cannon Street
Preston PR1 3NS
Tel: 0772 204988
Fax: 0772 562070

STUDY TOUR October 28-30 Draft Itinerary

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28

Leave London by coach at 0700
Leave Dover at 0900 by ferry
Arrive Calais at 1115
Collect packed lunches
Coach to Rochefort - arrive 1400 to sample GLT operation on track and road following a presentation in the Town Hall.
Leave Rochefort at 1700 and depart for Ibis Duisburg. Guests from EVAG have been invited to the evening meal at 2000

THURSDAY OCTOBER 29

Leave hotel by EVAG bus at 0900
Arrive Essen 0930 - visit to O-Bahn routes following presentation at EVAG offices. Sample Duobus operation in guided and unguided modes
Lunch at Essen from 1230 to 1400
Arrive Eindhoven at 1600 - view bus priority and real time information display pilot project
Arrive Maastricht at 1830
Evening meal at 2000 with invited guests from European low-floor bus manufacturers

FRIDAY OCTOBER 30 1992

Walk to Exhibition & Congress Centre at 0900 for visit to RAI 1992 exhibition
Lunch onboard coach after leaving Maastricht at 1230
Arrive Ghent 1430 to view local bus priority scheme
Leave Ghent at 1630 and arrive at Calais for 1815 ferry
Arrive Dover at 1830
Arrive London 2000

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Trio of operators up for tourism awards

THREE coach and bus companies have been nominated in this year's England for Excellence Awards.

Sightseeing tour operator Guide Friday, Fareham-based coach operator Lucketts, and Transit Holdings owned-minibus enterprise Bayline of Torquay have been selected by regional tourist boards as contenders for the prestigious awards.

Lucketts Travel is up for the Tussauds Group Training Award, having been nominated by the Southern Tourist Board.

The company's chairman, David Lockett, is well-known for his campaigns for better training in coaching.

"At Lucketts, we are now starting vocational training of 18 to 21 year olds," said Mr Lockett. "Our drivers get every kind of training, right down to customer care. All of this has paid off. 1992 will be the best year in Lockett's history."

Guide Friday's managing director Roger Thompson said he was pleased to have been nominated by the Heart of England Tourist Board for the English Travel Company of the Year, but felt the huge disparity of entrants in the category - from Blakes Holidays to giant

Butlins - underlined the need for a new transport category.

"Every holidaymaker has to get to their holiday somehow. The time is right for a new transport award," Mr Thompson told *Coach Tours & Excursions*.

Guide Friday also spends a great deal of money training both its drivers and its guides: "And of course our sightseeing buses are a direct benefit to the cities they operate in. They reduce traffic to

the benefit of the community," he added.

The third company nominated is Bayline - one of the most profitable and successful arms of Harry Blundred's Transit Holdings. It now competes for the Center Parcs Tourism and the Environment Award with 18 other companies and projects.

"We are having a go on the basis that we have worked hard to make the fleet and the depot as environmentally friendly as possible," said general manager Mike Palmer. "We have a new depot with bus wash which operates with rainwater, and even that is recycled. It makes economic sense too because our water is metered."

Mr Palmer said his company was working with the council to promote and develop green routes, relieving car congestion. Two routes in particular - the Coastlink and Ferrybus - were examples of this successful approach.

The England for Excellence Awards are due to be judged during October, with a gala presentation of the Leo statuettes on November 10 at the Park Lane Hilton.

Past winners include Flights of Birmingham and Devon General.



Roger Thompson: 'need for new category'

QMH reports record results for half year

QUEEN'S Moat Houses plc has recorded pre-tax profits of £38 million for the half-year until July '92.

The company says it has achieved its aim to become a fully-integrated European hotel group by '92, hoping that dependence on one tourism economy would then be eliminated. It now operates 189 hotels in 10 European countries, representing a total of 22,291 bedrooms.

The interim share dividend of 1.395p per share is a four per cent increase over the same period in 1991.

Latest Moat House deal spells group profit

ASUPERB deal between American Adventure Theme Park and Nottingham Moat House nets operators bed and breakfast plus free admission for just £25 a head.

The package effectively allows American Adventure to appeal to groups based further afield, travelling down on, for instance, Friday night, enjoying a full English breakfast Saturday morning, off the park, and back in the evening. The hotel's proximity to major motorways and trunk roads adds to the appeal.

Nottingham Moat House is a top-quality hotel which has recently undergone extensive refurbishment. It has a completely redesigned entrance and new reception area. There are two restaurants. The offer may also give operators a profitable way to assess the Moat House for longer breaks, for instance to Robin Hood and the Castle.

The offer runs on all weekends until the end of the year, and weekdays in September. Details are from 0602 602621, fax 0602 691506.

Workshop hosted by new museum

THE new Yorkshire Car Collection at Keighley is to host the first Yorkshire and Humberside Tourist Board excursions workshop on Saturday October 3. The event will include offers of familiarisation trips, discounts, special offers and prize draws. Details from the tourist board on 0904 707961.

THE British Universities Accommodation Consortium is reporting record inquiries for its annual show for the second time in two years. At the Tuesday October 27 event, at Kensington Town Hall, BUAC's 61 members will be demonstrating how far their accommodation, now 75,000 beds, has improved in the last few years, with much self-catering accommodation now at four-star standard. Details of the show from BUAC, on 0602 504571.

NEWCOMER Pavilion Services added entertainment to the plethora of facilities at its 11 sites during last Bank Holiday weekend. Discos, barrel organs, magicians and giveaways for the children featured in a new 'fun' approach to motorway services. The restaurants already offer health-conscious food. Pavilion bought all of Rank's service areas earlier this year.

THE whacky manager of Redworth Hall Hotel and Country Club (0388 772442) near Newton Aycliffe is offering fun Wild Cat Weekends - giving guests a chance to hunt down the legendary County Durham Puma. The £175 package includes hire of video recorder, maps, pith helmet, telescope, two legs of lamb as bait, and the advice of a local 'expert.'

SWALLOW Hotels is trying for BS5750 for its leisure and fitness clubs. The chain has 28 of them, which it says will be monitored for everything from storage and use of safety equipment to customer care: The BS5750 qualification will help us to communicate this to the outside world," said personnel director John Deighan.

The Galleria

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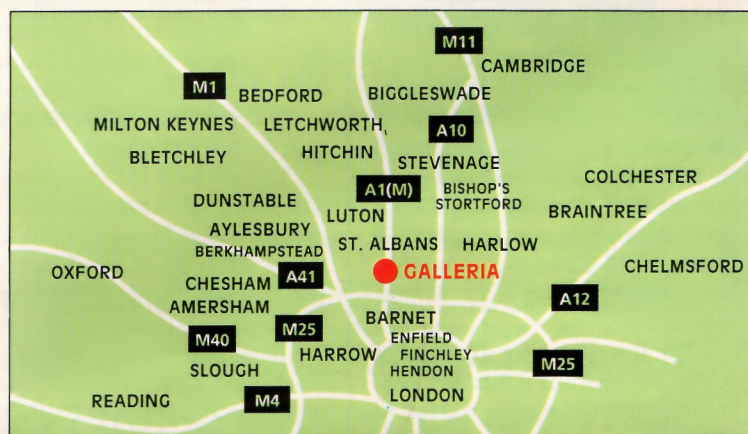
Only five minutes north of the M25, with air cooled malls, a crèche and facilities for the disabled, it's an ideal location for coach visits from all over Britain, especially for parties on their way back from weekend visits to London.

The Galleria is open from 12-6 every Sunday, Saturday 10-6 and weekdays from 10 till 8pm.

With over 100 quality stores, spectacular architecture, nine restaurants and nine screen cinema open till late, there's something for everybody.

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Please call The Galleria on (0707) 278301 for details.



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BCC has talks on package law

THE Bus & Coach Council is running a series of roadshows updating operators on the Government's plans for package holiday legislation.

"We are staging the regional events to give you the chance to find out what is going to happen," said BCC director of membership and regions, Philip Carlisle.

Mr Carlisle warned that the legislation is due to come into force in January: "If you run package holidays, you ought to begin planning for the future right now."

Operators should inform regional secretaries that they will be attending roadshows, particularly if they are outside of their own region.

Dates and venues are:

● **September 15**, North Western Region BCC, 7.30 pm, The Ridgway Arms, Blackrod Station, on B5238 at Horwich near Bolton.

● **September 16**, Scottish Region, 2.30 pm, Silvertrees Hotel, Silvertree Crescent, Bothwell.

● **September 21**, South Wales Region, 8 pm, The Marriot Hotel, Swansea Marina.

● **September 24**, Western Region, 7 pm, Forte Posthouse Hotel, Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton, off junction 25, M5.

● **September 28**, Yorkshire Region, 7.30 pm, Kerresforth Hall, Kingstone, Barnsley, off exit 37, M1.

● **September 29**, East Midlands Region, 7.15 pm, Robin Hood Hotel, Lombard Street, Newark, at junction of A46 and A6065.

● **September 30**, West Midlands Region, 7.30 pm, Post House Hotel, Chapel Lane, Great Barr, on A34 off junction 7 of M6.

● **October 1**, London and Home Counties Region, 2 pm, The Talk of London, New London Theatre, Parker Street.



Nick Berry unveils the giant mural at the Yorkshire Car Collection

Painter puts bus in picture

BUSES have been driven straight into the walls of the Yorkshire Car Collection at Keighley.

A massive mural painted by local artist Robert Yates features all modes of motor transport, and brightens up one of Yorkshire's

newest attractions. The painting was unveiled by Heartbeat actor and pop star Nick Berry.

Operators wishing to see the transport museum first hand can visit the forthcoming Yorkshire and Humberside Workshop. Details are on page 33 of this issue.

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It's 24-hour cover for continental

WHOLESALE Continental Tours is providing a 24-hour emergency number for coach operators running its packages.

The Bath-based firm says drivers too can let Continental Tours do the troubleshooting: "We pride ourselves in providing the coach operator with a personal, friendly service, giving advice not only on hotel accommodation but also on itinerary and excursion planning," said Jayne Hope.

Very low rates are available for weekends to Paris, Rouen, Lille and Calais this winter and next spring.

☎ Contact Mrs Hope on 0225 858577 for full details.

Whipsnade goes it alone as London Zoo falters

THE imminent closure of London Zoo and the bad publicity it has generated has prompted Whipsnade Wild Animal Park to form its own stand-alone, limited company.

On October 1, the established coaching venue is to divorce itself from the problems at Regent's Park though remaining part of the Zoological Society of London. Whipsnade has turned a £1.3 million deficit into a small profit within two years, having invested £1.5 million in new facilities.

"We want to make it clear that the difficulties at Regent's Park will not, in future, affect the progress of Whipsnade," said a

spokesman.

Management at Whipsnade have reassured the public that the new status will not mean a new commercialism: "Whipsnade is the largest conservation park in Europe and already successfully breeds more endangered large animals than anybody else in Europe," said a spokesman.

Chief executive of Whipsnade, Andrew Forbes, said the changes would enable the park to have a separate identity: "We call upon the public to help us provide a haven for animals threatened with extinction from the pressures that man places on the natural world."

● Coach operators are being given

hefty discounts on Whipsnade's discount passports.

The £30-worth of vouchers - numbered individually for visitors - normally sell for £1.50 but operators can buy them for £1 apiece. Each passport contains discounts for extras in the park, with 'Visas' to be collected at special events.

During the valid year, passport holders can win prizes in regular draws and competitions, made using the individual number on each passport.

☎ Full details of Whipsnade Passports are available from the park, on 0582 872171, Fax 0582 872649.



Wanlockhead: highest village, newest centre

Lead-mining visitor centre

SCOTLAND'S highest village has opened a new visitor centre suitable for coach groups. Wanlockhead in Dumfriesshire now boasts its lead-mining

museum, 60-seat restaurant, restored period cottages, toilets and gift shop.

☎ Details from the Museum Trust on 0659 74387.

Aladdin manager conjures up new deals

ALADDIN'S business development manager Allan Edmondson is on the road outlining the tour wholesaler's plans for the '93 season.

Mr Edmondson says the key to a bright summer season won't be the same for every operator, so each programme will be the one the operator wants rather than the tours the wholesaler wants to sell.

"Many operators clearly recognise that the economic situation

has affected business, but by and large, they are responding with products competitively priced and imaginatively planned," he said.

On top of the tours themselves, Aladdin will be helping smaller operators with a complete marketing package including brochure design and production and even management consultation.

☎ Details are from Allan Edmondson or Erica Duggan, on 0234 713613, fax 0234 240984.

BTA splits tourist board work

THAMES and Chiltern Tourist Board has been put into the hands of liquidators and its work shared between other British Tourist Authority members.

The tourist board went into receivership earlier this summer but now accountants have decided it has no future in its present form. As a result, the five counties which

had been represented by it are now relying on the BTA, Southern, East Anglian and Heart of England Tourist Boards, and other tourism agencies.

The BTA says commitment to some national promotional projects will be honoured. The World Travel Market and British Travel Trade Fair will still feature former T&CTB products.

Parlez-vous Solent Blue Line?

SOLENT Blue Line has produced multi-lingual guides to the region's attractions.

The Southampton operator has translated its bus guides in French, German and Spanish to encourage incoming tourists and students to get the best from Hampshire's venues.

"We know that, in the past, students in particular found the guides a bit difficult to follow and probably missed out on the best of the area's historic and countryside attractions," said commercial director Philip Curtis.

The guides are free from Solent Blue Line travel shops and the tourist information office.



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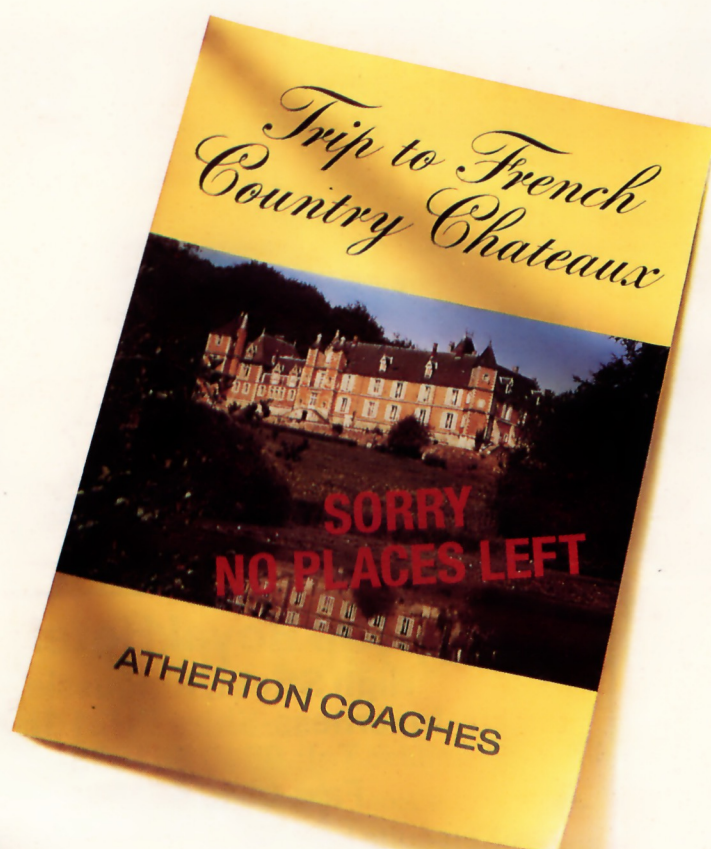
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Royalty in £10k handout!

A £10,000 handout from Royalty and Empire in Windsor is keeping the coaches coming.

Last year, the exhibition decided the hefty £10 parking charge at the adjacent council coach park might put drivers off coming, so offered to repay parking charges for any group of 20 or more.

Though the parking fees went up this year, Royalty and

Empire decided to continue the offer, and now says the total bill will be around £10,000.

"To qualify, coach drivers only have to accompany a group of over 20 to the group bookings desk," said sales and marketing manager Jerry Procter. "This speeds up entry as only one payment is made, gives passengers the benefit of the group rate discounts, and

ensures that the driver obtains the refund.

"Unfortunately, drivers who are not present when the group payment is made or whose passengers come into the exhibition as individuals cannot qualify for the repayment."

Details of the full package of discounts are available from Jerry Procter, on 0753 857837, mentioning this article.

Tourism departments have it taped

WAKEFIELD and Barnsley tourism departments have devised a Yorkshire Mining Heritage Trail and can provide a lighthearted audio tape free to all coach operators to guide them round the trail.

This award-winning trail links significant sites of mining heritage and sites associ-

ated with coal mining.

Starting and ending at the Yorkshire Mining Museum, the trail illustrates the working and living conditions of coal miners over the last 200 years.

Sites along the way include the Elsecar project, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Monk Bretton Priory.

Within the larger trail, a

full day can be planned with the Yorkshire Mining Museum in conjunction with Ferrybridge C power station, tracing the history of coal mining and its production, through transportation to see its final conversion into electricity.

For further information contact Wakefield Tourism on 0924 295841.



James Gash face to face with one of Queen Victoria's Coldstream Guardsmen on his visit to Royalty and Empire



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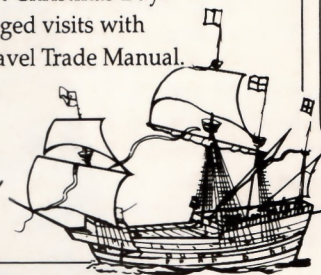
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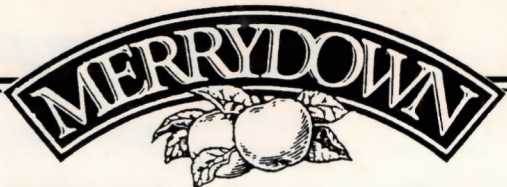
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UK holidays: a good year

DESPITE a dramatic decline in the domestic holiday market from 1989 to 1990, the '91 season held up well says a new UK tourist boards survey.

While the number of holiday trips fell ten per cent from '89 to '90, and the number of bed nights by a similar percentage, spending by United Kingdom tourists rose a small percentage in '90 and by a further five per cent, to £7.75 billion, in '91.

The UK Tourist: Statistics 1991 survey reveals that 79 per cent of all holiday trips were made by car, eight per cent by train and a further eight per cent by bus or coach. Seaside locations were again the most popular, accounting for 40 per cent of all holidays.

Most popular months for holidays were August (18 per cent), July (14 per cent), May (11 per cent) and September (10 per cent).

The popularity of short breaks is underlined by the fact that 44 per cent of all trips were from one to three days long.

Only 18 per cent of holidays were seven nights, and only 15 per cent longer. But, according to the

survey, the short breaks market stood almost still in '91, at around 26 million trips. The number of longer holidays (four nights or more) dropped from 34 million in '89, to 31.7 million in '91 then rose marginally to 32.2 million in '91.

Twenty one per cent of all United Kingdom tourists went on holiday with a particular sport or activity in mind, the most popular of which was walking, whose participants accounted for seven per cent of the total holiday nights.

Next most popular activity was swimming (five per cent), visiting ancient monuments (four per cent) and fishing (four per cent).

Of the total tourism spend, 74 per cent came from the commercial sector, such as business trips, and 26 per cent from the holiday market.

Buses and coaches got nine per cent of the transport spend, trains eight per cent and planes four per cent. Cars accounted for 74 per cent of the total.

The UK Tourist: Statistics 1991, costs £55 from the English Tourist Board, Department D, 24 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1.



Rainbow shining

RAINBOW Holidays has been designated Travel Company of the Year in the White Rose Awards of Yorkshire and Humberside Tourist Board. Steve Price, Rainbow's managing director (above left), accepts the trophies from chairman of the Tourist Board, Sir Marcus Worsley.

CalMac for coaches

SCOTTISH ferry operator Caldonian MacBrayne steps down its service on October 18... but has stepped up its performance in coach carryings.

While the recession has hit much of the UK, coaches have helped CalMac to a boom. Car car-

ryings so far this summer are two per cent down, foot passenger carryings down three per cent... but CalMac has carried eight per cent MORE coaches.

The reduced winter schedule runs until April 25, when normal summer services take over.

Bright lights, new city

SUNDERLAND, the UK's newest city, opened its illuminations recently, hoping for a repeat of last year's success when three million saw the lights. An estimated 17 million people have seen the light show since its inauguration in 1986, and the popularity is being boosted by events such as a Son Et Lumiere featuring Eurythmics star Dave Stewart and a bonfire night and firework display on the last day of the illu-

minations, November 5.

Roker Park will feature everything from children's corner to fairground rides, and other areas along Sunderland seafront will stage music events.

In all, 150,000 lightbulbs are being used, with 15 miles of cable and a hundred crossroads displays stretching from Wearmouth Bridge to the City Boundary.

Details of lights and accommodation on 091 567 9400.

Austrian group guide

THE Upper Austria Tourist Office has produced a new bus and tour group sales guide with next year's hotel prices.

The manual details not only accommodation but restaurants suitable for meal stops, guided tours and package prices for tours assembled by the Austrian Tourist Board.

Next year's prices are more or less unchanged from this year and in some cases lower. Bed and

breakfast at many hotels is less than £15, and half board under £20 in high season.

Top-quality accommodation in four-star hotels ranges from £20 bed and breakfast to £32 a night half board.

Copies of *Bus & Tour '93* are available by writing to Landesverband für Tourismus in Oberösterreich, Schillerstraße 50, A-4010 Linz/Donau, Austria, fax: 010 43 732 600220.

Record period for tourism from western Europe

A RECORD for the number of inbound western European tourists was set in the first six months of this year, says the British Tourist Authority.

From January to June, 4.8 million holiday-makers and businessmen from western Europe arrived in Britain. A second record was set in June for the number of tourists from outside of Europe. In all, 370,000 visited - the highest June

figure on record.

Total inbound tourism revenue rose 12 per cent in the half year, to £3,155 million, and the number of tourists rose by a similar percentage to 7.8 million. Corresponding figures for June were £630 million and 1.6 million.

"The comparisons are, of course, with a period which last year included the Gulf War," said BTA chairman William Davis. "But these

official figures are good news, especially in view of this year's much-publicised problems on the domestic market.

"American tourists in particular are very price conscious and we are concerned about the current weakness of the dollar. The BTA's principal message for the past year has been that Britain is still an affordable destination - that our industry offers value for money."

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1978 LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON, 55 seater, CFF Mar 93, radio/PA, power door, re-moquetted, new engine£12,000

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1989 VOLVO B10M

Plaxton 3500 53 recliners, rear toilet

1990 VOLVO B10M

Van Hool, 52 seater, rear toilet

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ALTHOUGH it seems to have been with us for a long time, in-coach entertainment is a fairly recent phenomenon. It also relies heavily on the coach market segment served.

For example, the shuttle market started the in-coach video boom. Harry Shaw of Coventry has been in the market throughout. His fleet of 28 coaches are all fitted for shuttle work. Keeping the customer satisfied is the yardstick according to Mr Shaw. But he says that it pays to fit the best.

Some operators prefer retro-fitment of coach audio and video, but increasingly new vehicles come complete with standard original equipment as the market acknowledges the benefits of in-coach entertainment.

Up-to-the-minute technology usually means business at the very top end of the market. But in-coach entertainment is the exception to the rule. Sophisticated demands stimulated by the shuttle boom resulted from the need to relieve the boredom for the passengers. And families wanted to keep the kids quiet.

At first the fitting of a comprehensive audio/visual system required major surgery on the interior of some vehicles. But such cutting and fitting has now largely been replaced so that fitting specialists are able to tap into the coach manufacturers' wiring, which is ready-fitted, and coach roofs are now mostly strengthened — ready to take the weight of video monitors.

On older vehicles installation could take twice as long. It involves dropping the headlining and welding strengthening into the roof.

Professional fitment is advised to avoid future hassle. Fitters with the right facilities and capabilities to do the job are able to do it properly and safely.

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1987 (D) MERCEDES 307D, Devon conversions, 12 seats, tinted windows, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1986 (D) IVECO 79/14 Caetano, 24 moquette bus seats, power door, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1986 (D) FORD TRANSIT, 14 seats, petrol, s/door, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1985 B VOLVO B10M, Plaxton Paramount 3500, 50 seats, rear toilet, HP ZF auto gearbox, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1985 (B) LEYLAND TIGER CUB, Duple Dominant bus body, Allison automatic gearbox, 27 coach seats, 8 standees, MoT June 1993.

1983 (Y) LEYLAND TIGER CUB, Reeves Burgess body, 25 seats, power door, MoT September 1992.

1988 (E) VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 seat coach, toilet, continental door, TV, video, radio PA, MoT April 93.

1980 (V) LEYLAND LEOPARD, Plaxton Supreme IV, 11 metre, 49 seats, Express door, destination gear, MoT February 1993.

1979 (T) BEDFORD YMT, Plaxton Supreme IV, 11 metre, 53 seats, Express door, MoT August 1993.

1977 (R) LEYLAND LEOPARD, Willowbrook body, 49 seats, semi-auto, power door, MoT June 1992.

1977 (R) BRISTOL LHS, 30 seats, power door, MoT October 1992.

OLD MILL PARK, KIRKINTILLOCH, GLASGOW G66 1SP. Fax 041-777 8138

(28995/VS)

Due to forthcoming vehicle replacements, **Lucketts Travel** have the following selection of vehicles for sale.

1988 DENNIS JAVELIN, Plaxton Paramount 3200, 53 reclining seats, arm rests, Econocruise speed limiter, radio cassette/PA system, MoT exp Sept 1993, private plate, owned from new**£49,950**

1989 DENNIS JAVELIN, Duple 320, 57 reclining seats, Econocruise speed limiter, radio cassette/PA, MoT exp Feb 1993, private plate**£48,950**

1986 DAF MB200, Jonckheere Jubilee P50, 51 reclining seats, O/S rear sunken toilet, coffee machine, fridge, wired for TV/video, Telma, arm rests, Lucas speed limiter with cruise control, MoT exp Jan 1993, private plate, courier seat, owned from new**£47,950**

1986 DAF MB200, Jonckheere Jubilee P50, 53 reclining seats, arm rests, O/S rear cont door, radio cassette/PA, wired for TV/video, Telma, Lucas speed limiter with cruise control, MoT exp April 1993, private plate, owned from new**£45,000**

1989 DENNIS JAVELIN, Duple 320, 53 reclining seats, radio/cassette/PA, Econocruise speed limiter, MoT exp Feb 1993, arm rests, private plate, courier seat**£48,950**

1990 MAN 10.180, Caetano Algarve, 35 reclining seats, arm rests, O/S rear cont door, courier seat, MoT exp Jan 1993, owned from new**£55,000**

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or service spec, + standees, early.NEW TRANSIT, diesel, 8 seats, Taxi pack +
luggage, stock.NEW TRANSIT 16, diesel, 5-speed, s/door, stock.
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seats, high roof, coachbuilt, stock.NEW DAF 400, diesel, 16 PSV, hi spec, stock.
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92 TRANSIT 15 diesel lux PSV.

91 (J) MERCEDES 24, power door, boot,
tested.91 (J) LEYLAND DAF, 16 PSV, p/door, low
mile, tested.

91 (J) TALBOT Tri Axle, 22 + 8 moquette.

90 LEYLAND (Peugeot) 16 ch seats PSV.

90 H MERCEDES 609 diesel, 24 coach
spec, new test

90 MERCEDES 609, 24 coach seats + boot.

89 DAF 2300 Caetano, 49 + sunken
toilet, TV89 DAF 425 DAF, 55 recliners, TV,
d/gazed, courier seat, PA, low mileage.

89 TRANSIT diesel, SWB 11 + driver

89 MERCEDES 300D, 14 PSV

89 IVECO CARLYLE, 25 seats, p. door.

88 MERCEDES 609, 26, p. door, tested.

88 MERCEDES 811D, 27 coach spec

88 MERCEDES 709, 25 + standees,
Alexander service spec.88 VOLVO Duple 340, 49 recliners, toilet,
TV.

87 (D) FREIGHT ROVER, Deansgate, 16 dsl.

87 TRANSIT Petrol, 12, PSV, SWB.

87 MERCEDES 811 Turbo, 27 seats,
testing.86 IVECO, 19 + 7 standees, service
buses, manual box, new test.

86 MERCEDES 600D, 21 luxury, new test.

86 TRANSIT Diesel, crew bus, 13 seats.

86 RENAULT DODGE, 20 + standees,
large entry door, Telma, auto, power
steering, new test.

85 TRANSIT 12, LWB, petrol, PSV.

85 IVECO 18 seats, Beja coach, tested.

84 MCW DD Cummins, 73 seats, testing.

84 NEOPLAN MERC 75 seat, full spec,
V10 man box, new test.84 MAN VAN HOOL, Astron, 57 seats,
Executive, tested.

83 VOLV B10M BERKHOF, 49, toilet, TV.

83 DODGE R BURGESS, diesel, auto, 17 F
door.

83 TRANSIT 15 seat diesel, non PSV.

82 Y DAF Jonckheere 2300, Exec, toilet,
tested.

82 VOLVO B10M, Van Hool, exec, testing.

81 DAF 200 Exec, 46 + TV, Alpha, tested.
Offers80 LEYLAND NATIONAL, 680 Bendi Bus,
low mil, exhibition vehicle, offers.

79 V FORD Plaxton, 45 seats, new test.

79 V VOLVO Duple R, 48 rec, toilet, tested.

79 FORD TURBO Duple R, 35 seats, testing.

79 V VOLVO UNICAR, 53 seat, testing.

78 LEYLAND Duple Express, tested.

78 LEYLAND AEC, 46 Plaxton, no test.

75 BEDFORD CAETANO, 20 seats, PSV.

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1984 Duple Laser Tiger 245, 50 reclining seats, MoT '92£22,000

1984 Paramount 3500 Tiger 245 Exec, requires panel and paint, MoT Aug

'92£26,500

1980 Plaxton Volvo B58, 53 retrimmed seats, S/A, ready for work, MoT Nov 92

.....£14,000

1980 Plaxton Leopard, 49 seats, MoT Dec '92, repainted£10,000

1980 Ford Dominant II, 53 seats, MoT April '93, very good condition, many extras

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1978 Plaxton Leopard, MoT Jan '93, 53 seats, repainted£7,500

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1982 VOLVO B10M Jonckheere

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1987 DAF SB2300 Duple 340,

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1986 PP Volvo B10M GLT, Jonckheere Jubilee 599, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, double glazing, Webasto fin rad, fridge, bunk, carpet, boiler, splitter gearbox, Telma, alloy wheels, Soltrak air conditioning, Tempo 100, TV, video. **£53,000**

1985 PP Volvo B10M GLT Jonckheere Jubilee 599, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, double glazing, courier seat, Webasto fin rad, boiler, fridge, carpet, bunk, splitter gearbox, Telma, alloy wheels, Sutrak air conditioning, Tempo 100, TV video, new test. **£43,000**

1985 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500 11 metre, 48 reclining seats, courier seat, double glazing, Sutrak air conditioning, Webasto, curtains. **£39,500**

1983 PP Volvo B10M Jonckheere Bermuda, 49 reclining seats (retrimmed) courier seat, rear sunken toilet, fridge, boiler, Webasto bunk, curtains, TV. **£28,000**

1982 Volvo B10M Plaxton Supreme 12M, 53 'E' Type seats retrimmed, tinted glass, curtains. **£23,500**

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1987 E DAF SB2300 Vanhool Astrobel Double Decker 71 seater, toilet, serving, bunk, fridge, new 8.25 turbo intercooled engine, new test. **£56,000**

1982 Y DAF SB2300 Plaxton Supreme 53 retrimmed seats, refloored, tinted glass new test. **£17,500**

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1987 E LAG Panoramic Integral 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, double glazing, Webasto, Telma, new test. **£52,500**

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Health and Safety regulations to be introduced next year and a warning from both the Association of British Insurers and major insurance companies has given new impetus to driver training/re-training. Paragraph 37 of the H & S regs which comes out on January 1, 1993 says: "New employees should be trained and re-trained at certain intervals to reduce health and safety risks." A coach or bus is a place of work for the purposes of the Health & Safety Executive.

Paragraph 24 covers all working activities – that implies driving a vehicle on company business.

Companies who take-up driver training see a reduction in vehicle wear and tear, fuel consumption and most of all the accident rate. A few hours with the experts pays dividends.

Some operators have turned to the Institute of Advanced Motorists to provide training facilities. Yorkshire Traction of Barnsley and Ulsterbus are among the first.

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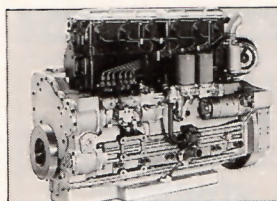
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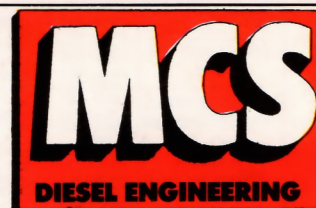
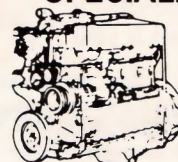
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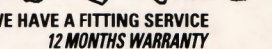
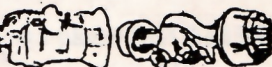
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THURSDAY OCTOBER 1ST 1992 COMMENCING AT 11.00AM
 This PSV Sale at Newport will include a large and varied selection of vehicles, full details of which will be available nearer the sale date. We welcome entries from Fleet Operators, Local Authorities and Private Owners alike. Please telephone with full details for inclusion in our extensive program of advertising and mailshots. Details for our published advertising should be with us by 5.30PM FRIDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER 1992. For further information on entries contact: **Eddie Gerrard or Steve Pearson on Tel: 0633 270222, Fax: 0633 270262**

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(28857/AU)

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TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

The Midland Travel division of this company operates 45 coaches and buses from its base at Shirebrook providing a comprehensive programme of extended holidays, tours, private hire and some local bus services.

The above position has full responsibility for the day-to-day co-ordination and forward planning of vehicle and staff allocations and the efficient operation of a busy traffic department.

This is an opportunity for an enthusiastic, experienced and commercially aware individual to join the country's most successful bus group.

A salary of £14,000 p.a., contributory pension scheme and relocation expenses are offered.

Applications in writing, enclosing a full CV should be sent to:-

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To arrive by 28 September 1992.

APPOINTMENTS AND TENDERS

PUBLIC NOTICE



**MONOPOLIES AND MERGERS
COMMISSION COMPETITION ACT 1980
(SECTION 5) INQUIRY INTO SOUTHDOWN
MOTOR SERVICES LIMITED (NOW CALLED
SUSSEX COASTLINE BUSES LIMITED)**

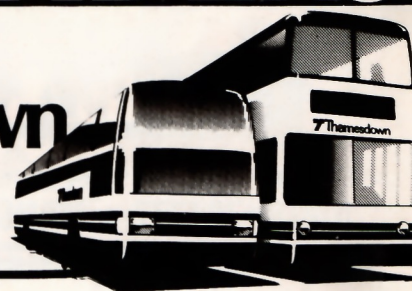
The Director General of Fair Trading has asked the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to investigate the conduct by Southdown Motor Services Limited (now called Sussex Coastline Buses Limited) of its operation of local bus services in the Bognor Regis area, with particular regard to the registration, operation and charging of uneconomic fares on those services with the intention of undermining the viability of the operations of a competitor.

Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the full terms of reference or to submit evidence should write to: The Reference Secretary (Southdown Motor Services), Monopolies and Mergers Commission, New Court, 48 Carey Street, London WC2A 2JT. Any evidence should be submitted no later than 30 September 1992.

(28856/PN)

Thamesdown

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(28859/APP)

bus service information ☎ 523700

bus & coach hire ☎ 535110

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**Based in Ilford
£22,000**

East London Bus and Coach Company Limited are looking for an experienced Contracts Manager to maintain and develop its purchasing and supply function.

Based at our Company Headquarters in Ilford the jobholder will report directly to the Finance Director and will be expected to liaise closely with other senior managers and outside bodies.

Ideally you will be a member of the Institute of Purchasing and Supply or educated to degree level with considerable relevant experience. A good working knowledge of computerised purchasing and inventory control systems is essential.

Among other benefits we offer
generous travel concessions.



For further information and an application form, please telephone
Paul Leagas on

081-478 1827

THOMAS LO

Arnolde Close, Sir Thomas Lo
Frindsbury, R
Telephone: 0634 711

or write to East London Bus & Coach Company Limited,
16-20 Clements Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 1BA

(28881/APP)

Northern first with NVQ

THE first bus driver in the south of England to be awarded a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) for driving and customer care skills is London Northern's **Bruce Cunningham**, who is based at the London Buses subsidiary's Potters Bar Garage.

London Buses is currently offering 80 per cent of its staff the opportunity to acquire a relevant NVQ. The company encourages drivers, engineering grades and driving instructors to gain NVQs. Further NVQs for managers and

supervisors will be introduced shortly.

Drivers are assessed on practical skills including safety, driving skills and customer care.

They also have to select one optional unit, the most appropriate for London Buses' drivers being Operating Local Bus Services.

London Buses has promoted NVQs to its employees through information packs and video presentations, and each of its 11 subsidiary companies has an NVQ coordinator to liaise with the award-

ing body. Preparation for the assessment takes between three months and a year.

NVQs, which aim to assess the effectiveness of training in Britain and to raise the standards of the workforce, are based on the assessment of competence in the work place, as opposed to academic qualifications.

The NVQs in the bus industry have been developed and are awarded by the industry's lead body, Bus and Coach Training.



Northern's first in south with NVQ

The JIG is just the job

FAZAL Rahman, now a midibus driver at CentreWest's Westbourne Park, is the 50,000th person to have found employment through the Department of Employment's Job Interview Guarantee scheme.

Gillian Shepherd, Secretary of State for Employment, presented him with a certificate at the Oval Job Centre to commemorate the placing.

Westbourne Park is London's largest bus garage and CentreWest has been a major user of the JIG

scheme, which gives job applicants a week's pre-recruitment training before they face the selection process.

CentreWest's recruitment and training manager, Graham Oliver, said: "I've been using the scheme more and more since it started two years ago.

"I find it extremely useful as it gives applicants the chance to learn about the jobs we offer before they reach us and to polish up their numerary, literacy and interview skills."

New md for DAB-Silkeborg

UNITED Bus company DAB-Silkeborg of Denmark is to have a new managing director.

Current md, Erik Christensen is to retire by the end of the year after 20 years as the head of the company.

The directors have appointed Poul Arne Jensen, 44, currently

the managing director of container manufacturer Norfrig A/S.

As new managing director at DAB he will co-operate with commercial director Orla Madsen, who will be in charge of marketing and sales, while Mr Jensen will be in charge of technical developments, production workshops and finance.

Watkins vice chairman at London Transport

DR ALAN Watkins has been appointed vice chairman and chief executive of London Transport. His responsibilities include London Underground, London Buses and LT Trading.

Aged 53, Dr Watkins joins London Transport after a career in industry. Graduating with a PhD in industrial metallurgy from Birm-

ingham University, he spent a further period in research, then took a number of general management positions with Lucas Batteries and Lucas Aerospace, where he became main board director of Lucas Industries responsible for Aerospace.

In 1989 he joined Hawker Siddeley Group where he was chief executive until 1991.

Sir Hugh heads London Tourist Board

THE London Tourist Board's new chairman, Sir Hugh Bidwell, has taken over following the death of Dame Shelagh Roberts earlier this year.

The former Lord Mayor of London said he was joining at an exciting time.

"Politicians now recognise the enormous importance of London's position as a world capital and that we must all guard against complacency.

"The Government's plan for a new London forum is tangible evidence of this," he said.

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3 Year	£110	£0.70	£25

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Company.....
Address.....
Postcode..... Tel No.....

YOUR COMPANY DETAILS (please tick as appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Bus operator <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Total number of: | iv) Midi buses..... |
| Coach operator <input type="checkbox"/> | i) Single deck buses..... | v) Mini buses..... |
| Other (please specify)..... | ii) Double deck buses..... | |
| | iii) Coaches..... | |
| 3. Total No of Employees..... | 4. Which of the following does your company operate? | |
| | Day excursions <input type="checkbox"/> | Express coach service <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Tour programme <input type="checkbox"/> | Private/contract hire <input type="checkbox"/> |
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PAYMENT (please tick as appropriate)

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